THE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

of Nebraska Community Colleges

FY25

Prepared by Tripp Umbach

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ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY IMPACT
HIGHLIGHTS FY25

Nebraska's Community Colleges at a Glance

30,089 Credit students + **30,960** Non-credit students = **61,049** Total students

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF NEBRASKA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES ON NEBRASKA

One in every 30 jobs in Nebraska was held directly by a Nebraska community college employee or supported by the presence of Nebraska community colleges.[1]

$3.84 billion
generated statewide in economic impact

46,943 total jobs
supported and sustained statewide and nationwide

$165.7 million
generated in state and local taxes

ECONOMIC IMPACT BY CATEGORY	ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT IMPACT	TAX IMPACT
OPERATIONS	$1.03 billion	11,782 total jobs	$51.2 million
CAPITAL INVESTMENT	$233.6 million	2,672 total jobs	$11.4 million
STUDENT SPENDING	$117.3 million	1,348 total jobs	$4.7 million
ALUMNI	$2.46 billion	31,140 total jobs	$98.4 million

COMMUNITY IMPACT

$32.1 MILLION in donated time and charitable giving by staff, faculty, and learners.

Note: *These benefits are in addition to the* ***$3.84 billion*** *economic impact generated by Nebraska community colleges statewide.*

[1] Tripp Umbach used benchmarking and data from Nebraska: Midwest Information Office: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

RETURN ON EDUCATION INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Students: For every **$1** invested in their education, students realize **$6** in lifetime earnings.

$24.8 billion

in total increased lifetime earnings from students who were in a Nebraska community college in FY25.

ROI FOR STUDENTS

$6

FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED

State: For every **$1** invested in a community college, the public sector generates **$3** in additional tax revenues over the student's lifetime.

$991.5 million

in total incremental tax revenue attributable to increased lifetime earnings from students who were in a Nebraska community college in FY25.

ROI FOR THE STATE

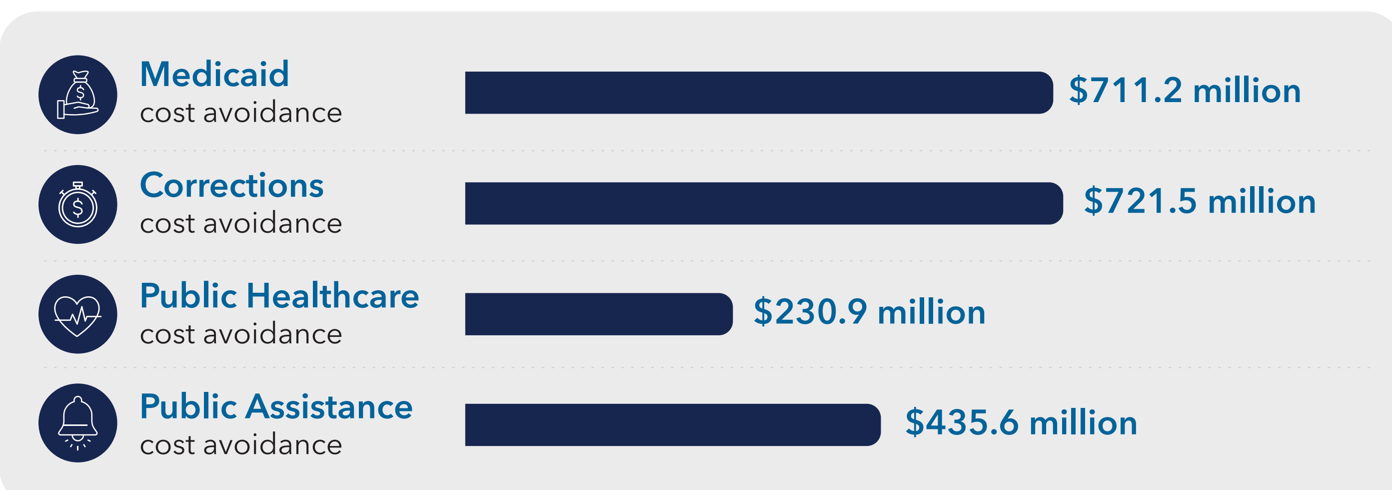
$3

FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED

PUBLIC SECTOR COST AVOIDANCE HIGHLIGHTS

$2.1 billion

in estimated reductions in public expenditures attributable to educational attainment over the working lifetime of Nebraska community college students from FY25.



INTRODUCTION

Guided by a shared commitment to access, workforce readiness, and community responsiveness, Nebraska's community colleges collectively advance the state's economic and workforce objectives. Through aligned regional missions and locally responsive programming, the colleges contribute to Nebraska's economic vitality individually and, where applicable, through collaborative efforts supported by organizations such as the Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA). Together, these institutions deliver impact that extends well beyond what any single college could achieve in isolation. As key drivers of Nebraska's economy, the community colleges contribute in the following ways:

Economic Impact: Nebraska's community colleges serve as foundational economic institutions within their service areas, embedding public investment directly into local economies. Through ongoing operations, capital investments, and localized procurement, the colleges circulate dollars within their regions, particularly in rural and micropolitan communities where alternative economic anchors are limited. This institutional presence stabilizes markets, supports businesses, and reinforces economic continuity across diverse regions of the state.

Employment Impacts: Community colleges provide a reliable source of employment across Nebraska, supporting **3,063** full-time and **4,008** part-time faculty and staff in professional, instructional, and technical roles, as well as **646** employed students. These positions offer long-term employment stability and predictable income streams, strengthening household spending and local economic resilience. In their areas, community colleges rank among the few large employers with year-round operations and enduring commitments to place.

State Tax Impact: The economic activity generated by Nebraska's community colleges produces meaningful returns for state and local governments. Employee compensation, institutional purchasing, and spending by students and visitors generate recurring tax revenues that help fund public services, infrastructure, and community amenities. These fiscal impacts extend beyond campus boundaries, reinforcing the financial sustainability of municipalities and counties throughout Nebraska.

Workforce Pipeline and Talent Retention: Community colleges function as a primary on-ramp to Nebraska's workforce, delivering credentials and skills aligned with employer demand. In FY25, the colleges awarded **10,338** degrees and certificates, preparing workers for high-need sectors critical to the state's economy. By educating residents close to home and aligning programs with regional labor markets, community colleges play a central role in retaining talent and ensuring that Nebraska's workforce remains adaptable and competitive.

Community Impacts: Nebraska's community colleges operate as locally governed, community-centered institutions designed to respond quickly to regional challenges. Through partnerships with K–12 systems, employers, healthcare providers, and civic organizations, the colleges deliver customized training, dual-credit programs, adult education, and community services. This flexible, place-based approach strengthens economic mobility, supports business expansion, and improves quality of life, positioning community colleges as indispensable partners in Nebraska's long-term economic and social well-being.

The Nebraska Community College Association supports collaboration among participating institutions, further strengthening coordination and, where applicable, shared learning. The analysis that follows highlights the collective economic and community contributions of Nebraska's community colleges, demonstrating their role in driving economic activity, supporting job creation, generating tax revenues, and advancing workforce and community development across the state, positioning Nebraska for prolonged economic success.

STUDY OVERVIEW

To document and communicate the economic and public value of Nebraska's community colleges, the Nebraska Community College Association partnered with Tripp Umbach in August 2025 to conduct a comprehensive statewide impact assessment. This analysis is intended to inform policymakers, education leaders, and community stakeholders about the essential role community colleges play in supporting Nebraska's economy, workforce, and regional stability.

The study evaluates the collective and institution-specific impacts of:

- Central Community College
- Northeast Community College
- Metropolitan Community College
- Southeast Community College
- Mid-Plains Community College
- Western Nebraska Community College

These institutions form a statewide system of place-based colleges designed to deliver affordable education, workforce training, and community services aligned with regional labor market needs.

This analysis examines the full scope of economic activity associated with Nebraska's community college system during FY25, capturing the immediate fiscal contributions of these institutions and the long-term economic value they generate for students, communities, and the state. The study uses IMPLAN economic modeling to trace how spending flows through local economies and quantify the ripple effects on businesses, jobs, and tax revenue throughout Nebraska. Together, the following impact areas form a comprehensive picture of what Nebraska's community colleges contribute as educational institutions but also as engines of economic growth, workforce development, and community vitality.

Institutional Operations and Capital Investment Impact:
This component examines the economic impact generated by the day-to-day operating expenditures of Nebraska's community colleges, including employee compensation, benefits, vendor payments, and facility costs, as well as the economic activity generated by capital investments in buildings, equipment, and infrastructure. Together, these two streams of institutional spending produce a substantial total economic impact in FY25, supporting thousands of jobs and generating valuable tax revenue across the state.

Student Spending Impact:
This component captures the economic activity generated by the off-campus expenditures of Nebraska's enrolled students, including spending on housing, transportation, food, childcare, and other essential goods and services that support local economies. The analysis also accounts for spending by out-of-state students, who bring new dollars into Nebraska communities, and applies IMPLAN modeling to measure the full direct, indirect, and induced impacts of that spending on businesses and employment statewide.

Alumni Extra Earnings Impact:
The study examines the long-term economic benefits associated with increased earnings, labor force participation, and job retention attributable to community college education and training. Alumni earn more annually than they would without their community college credentials. This component also addresses the role of community college graduates in filling critical workforce gaps in healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and education, particularly in rural and medically underserved communities where the need is greatest and the pipeline of qualified workers has historically been thinnest.

Employment Impact:
The study quantifies jobs directly supported by community college payrolls, as well as additional employment generated through supply-chain activity and household spending as institutional and student dollars circulate through Nebraska's economy. Across operations, capital investment, and student spending, Nebraska's community colleges support jobs statewide, spanning industries well beyond the education sector.

State and Local Tax Impact:
Tax revenues generated through community college activity are examined across multiple categories, including payroll-related taxes, spending by employees and students within Nebraska, and the long-term tax contributions of alumni whose higher earnings produce persistent public revenue over their careers. The combined tax impact of operations, capital investments, student spending, and alumni's higher earnings represents a recurring return on the state's public investment in community college education.

Community Impacts:
The analysis recognizes the economic and social value of the civic contributions made by Nebraska community college students, faculty, and staff. These contributions support nonprofits, reduce the operating burden on community organizations, and deliver measurable benefits to communities across the state. This component reflects outcomes for the civic fabric of Nebraska's communities.

Return on Investment:
The study examines the financial return on community college education from the student and taxpayer perspectives. For students, the analysis measures the lifetime earnings premium associated with credential attainment relative to the combined cost of tuition and forgone wages during enrollment. For taxpayers, it evaluates the return on state appropriations through the lens of increased tax revenues and reduced public expenditures on programs such as Medicaid, corrections, and public assistance.

Public Sector Cost Avoidance:
A dedicated component of the analysis quantifies the long-term reduction in public expenditures attributable to the educational attainment of FY25 community college students over their working lifetimes. This includes projected savings across Medicaid, corrections, public healthcare, and public assistance programs, reflecting the well-documented relationship between higher educational attainment and reduced reliance on government-supported services over the course of a career.

These components capture the direct, indirect, and induced impacts generated by Nebraska's community colleges across the state. Beyond near-term spending impacts, the analysis highlights the enduring economic value created through workforce readiness, talent retention, and regional economic resilience, particularly in rural and underserved areas, where community colleges often serve as among the few stable public institutions that support economic opportunity and social mobility. The breadth of this analysis reflects a fundamental truth about Nebraska's community colleges: Their value cannot be measured by any single metric but only by the full and compounding impact they have on the students, communities, and economies they serve.

ECONOMIC IMPACT METHODOLOGY

Tripp Umbach utilized IMPLAN, a nationally recognized input-output modeling system widely used in higher education and public-sector economic analysis. Primary data, collected from each community college, included operational expenditures, capital spending (based on a multi-year average), employment and payroll data, benefits, and student enrollment information for FY25.

IMPLAN multipliers were applied to estimate how institutional spending circulates through Nebraska's economy, generating additional business activity, employment, and household income. In keeping with conservative modeling standards, the analysis excludes expenditures made outside the state to ensure that only in-state economic activity is captured. Spending assumptions are grounded in established benchmarks and standard economic modeling practices.

This disciplined, transparent approach provides a reliable estimate of the economic and community impact of Nebraska's community colleges, demonstrating their critical role in sustaining local economies, strengthening the workforce, and supporting long-term statewide prosperity.

TOTAL IMPACT OF NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGES FY25

Nebraska's community colleges serve as foundational institutions within the state's economy, supporting regional vitality through their operations, workforce development mission, and deep integration into the communities they serve. As locally governed, place-based institutions, the colleges function as education providers and economic actors in Nebraska's urban, micropolitan, and rural regions.

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the economic, employment, and fiscal impacts generated by Nebraska's six community colleges during FY25. The analysis captures four distinct but interconnected streams of economic activity: institutional operations, capital expenditures, student spending, and the long-term earnings impact of Nebraska's active community college alumni. By examining both the direct expenditures within each of these categories and the secondary impacts created as businesses, employees, and households re-spend income, the assessment illustrates how community colleges contribute to business activity, job creation, and public revenue throughout the state today and across full working lifetimes of students they educate.

This broad impact reflects the unique position community colleges occupy in the Nebraska economy. Unlike institutions whose economic footprint is largely confined to their campus communities, Nebraska's community colleges generate value through multiple channels simultaneously, as employers, as purchasers of goods and services, as destinations for student spending, and as the source of the workforce credentials that drive lifetime earnings of alumni.

Together, these four streams show total economic contribution far exceeding what any single measure could capture.

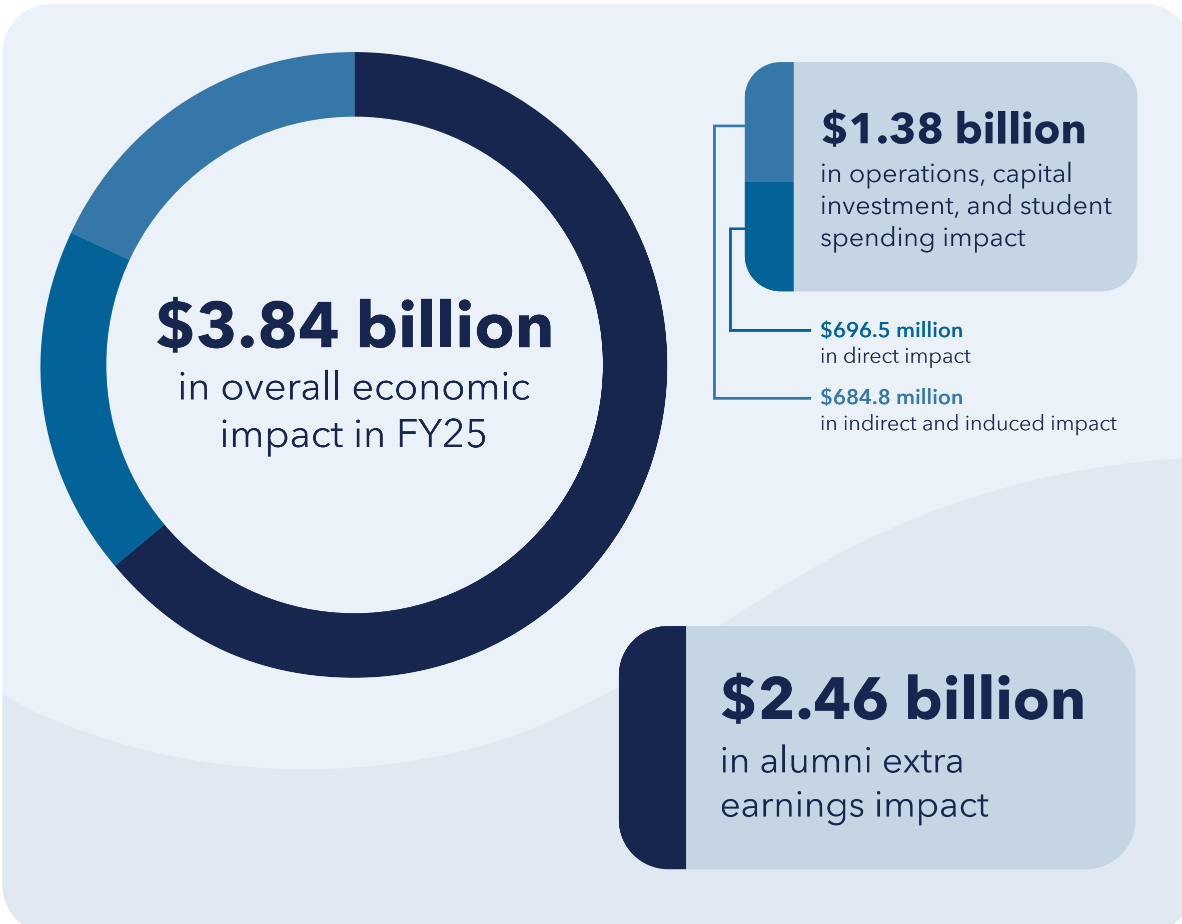
Economic impact flows through the following channels:

- **Direct Economic Activity:** Spending by Nebraska's community colleges on operations, facilities, capital improvements, and payroll, along with off-campus spending by students and employees, supports businesses and sustains employment across every region of the state. This direct spending represents the most immediate and visible layer of community college economic impact, flowing to the vendors, contractors, landlords, and service providers surrounding each campus.

- **Indirect and Induced Impact:** Payments to suppliers and households generate further rounds of spending across the state, resulting in expanded business output, additional jobs, and increased labor income. As vendors reinvest in their own supply chains and employees spend their wages in communities, the original institutional dollar multiplies and extends the economic reach of community college activity beyond the initial transaction and into industries and households that may have no direct relationship with the colleges.

- **Alumni Earnings Impact:** Beyond the near-term impacts of institutional and student spending, Nebraska's community colleges generate ongoing economic value through graduates' higher earnings. The additional annual income earned by Nebraska's community college alumni circulates through local economies annually, supporting jobs, generating tax revenue, and strengthening household financial stability across the state. This alumni earnings impact is among the most enduring and compelling dimensions of the community college economic story, a return on public investment that compounds with each graduating class and pays dividends for decades.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NEBRASKA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES



Nebraska's community colleges are major drivers of economic activity across the state, serving as critical economic anchors in urban, micropolitan, and rural regions. Their influence extends far beyond the classroom, flowing through institutional operations, capital investments, student spending, and the earning power of active alumni, whose higher wages circulate through Nebraska's economy year after year.

Nebraska's community colleges in FY25 generated an extraordinary **$3.84 billion** in total economic impact, capturing near-term impacts of institutional and student spending and long-term earnings impact of graduates. These two distinct but complementary dimensions of community college economic value represent one of the most compelling cases for continued public investment in community college education anywhere in the country.

The first dimension includes the direct economic activity generated by community college operations, capital investments, and student spending. In FY25, these combined activities produced **$696.5 million** in direct economic impact, flowing immediately into businesses, contractors, vendors, landlords, and service providers across Nebraska. As those dollars circulated through the economy, through supply chains, employee wages, and household spending, they generated an additional **$684.8 million** in indirect and induced economic activity, bringing the total economic impact from operations, capital investment, and student spending to **$1.38 billion**, an enormous footprint in the Nebraska economy supplied by six community colleges spread across every corner of the state.

The second dimension, which powerfully distinguishes community colleges as long-term economic investments rather than simply annual expenditures, is the impact on alumni earnings. Nebraska's community college alumni generated an estimated **$2.46 billion** in additional annual **earnings** in FY25, income above and beyond what those graduates would have earned without their community college credentials. These earnings recur annually throughout each graduate's working life, supporting families, sustaining businesses, generating tax revenue, and strengthening the economic fabric of communities where Nebraska's alumni live and work.

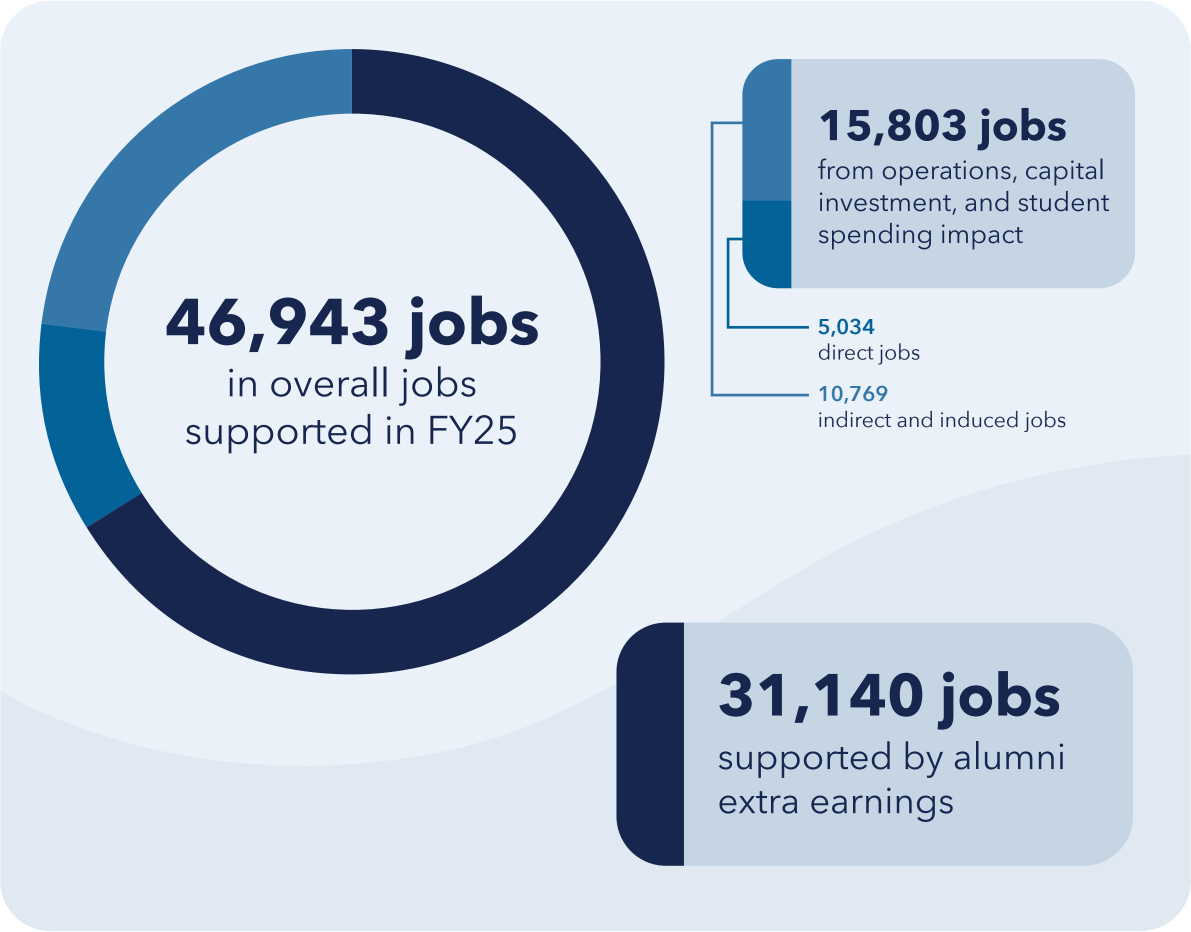
Every dollar invested in Nebraska's community college system generates returns that compound across industries, across communities, and across generations, with contributions flowing into education, construction, real estate, healthcare, financial services, retail, and food services.

Table 1: Top 10 Industries Impacted by Nebraska Community College Economic Activity, FY25

Rank	Industry
1	Junior colleges, colleges, universities, and professional schools
2	Construction of new educational and vocational structures
3	Other real estate
4	Owner-occupied dwellings
5	Hospitals
6	Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation
7	Limited-service restaurants
8	Offices of physicians
9	Insurance carriers, except for direct life
10	Retail, non-store retailers

From the institutional spending and capital activity driving construction and real estate demand to student and employee spending that supports restaurants, retailers, and healthcare providers, all of these industries create economic influence in the everyday commercial life of Nebraska.

EMPLOYMENT IMPACT OF NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGES ON THE STATE



Nebraska's community colleges are key employment drivers in the state. Their impact on Nebraska's labor market flows through multiple channels, from the jobs created directly by college operations and capital activity to the employment supported by student spending in communities to the thousands of jobs maintained by the higher wages of community college alumni circulating through the state's economy.

The six community colleges supported an estimated **46,943** jobs across industries, regions, and income levels in FY25.

Activities in college operations, capital investment, and student spending supported **5,034** direct jobs, positions bolstered by the immediate spending by the colleges and their students on goods, services, and labor within communities. As that spending rippled outward through supply chains and household budgets, it generated an additional **10,769** indirect and induced jobs, bringing the total employment impact from operations, capital investment, and student spending to **15,803** jobs statewide in education, construction, healthcare, retail, food service, and transportation.

The scale of this impact is striking. Together, the operational employment footprint of Nebraska's community colleges means that approximately 1 in 30 jobs in the state is directly supported by or economically connected to these institutions. The six community colleges contribute to employment stability, particularly in rural and underserved regions where the loss of an institution would leave a difficult-to-fill gap in the labor market.

The additional income generated by Nebraska's community college alumni underpinned an estimated **31,140** jobs in FY25, as higher-earning graduates spent more in their economies, supporting positions in retail, healthcare, professional services, construction, and beyond. These jobs exist because community college graduates earn more and because those earnings flow back into the communities where alumni live, spend, and build their lives.

Table 2: Top 10 Industries by Employment Impact, Nebraska Community Colleges, FY25

Rank	Industry
1	Junior colleges, colleges, universities, and professional schools
2	Construction of new educational and vocational structures
3	Other real estate
4	Limited-service restaurants
5	Hospitals
6	Personal care services
7	Full-service restaurants
8	Retail, food, and beverage stores
9	Transit and ground passenger transportation
10	Offices of physicians

The distribution of employment impact across industries demonstrates how community college operations sustain jobs well beyond the education sector. From construction crews building and maintaining campus facilities to restaurant workers and retail employees serving students and staff in communities to healthcare providers and transportation workers, community colleges are a workforce multiplier for nearly every sector of the Nebraska economy.

TAX IMPACT OF NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGES ON THE STATE

$67.3 million
from operations, capital investment, and student spending impact

$98.4 million
generated by alumni extra earnings

Publicly funded educational institutions are sometimes viewed primarily as recipients of tax revenue rather than as generators of it. But through their operations, capital activity, student spending, and long-term earnings power of graduates, Nebraska's community colleges are continual contributors to the state and local tax base.

The total tax impact attributable to Nebraska's community colleges in FY25 reached an estimated **$165.7 million** in state and local tax revenue, reflecting both near-term tax contributions from institutional and student spending and the long-term tax impact of alumni earnings, which create recurring public revenue.

The first stream of tax impact flows from college operations, capital expenditures, and student spending, generating **$67.3 million** in state and local tax revenue in FY25 via payroll-related taxes from college employment, sales and use taxes from institutional purchasing, and taxes from off-campus spending of students and employees. This near-term tax contribution alone demonstrates that community colleges strengthen and stabilize the tax base that funds essential public services and infrastructure statewide.

The additional income earned by Nebraska's community college alumni generated an estimated **$98.4 million** in state and local tax revenue in FY25, tax dollars that recur annually and are produced because more Nebraskans earn higher wages attributable to credentials provided by the state's community colleges.

A total FY25 tax impact of **$165.7 million** spans payroll, sales, property, and income taxes across Nebraska's state and local governments. When measured against the **$294.9 million** in state appropriations invested in Nebraska's community colleges in FY25, this tax impact alone represents a substantial and compelling return on public investment. It does not account for the additional fiscal savings generated through reduced reliance on Medicaid, corrections, public assistance, and other publicly funded programs addressed elsewhere in this report.

OPERATIONS IMPACT

$1.03 billion
in total operations impact in FY25

$524.5 million in direct operations impact
$505.8 million in indirect and induced operations impact

11,782 total jobs
supported by operations

3,063 direct jobs
8,719 indirect and induced jobs

$51.2 million
in tax revenue generated by operations

The day-to-day operations of Nebraska's community college system generate far more than degrees and credentials. They generate paychecks, purchases, and a multiplying wave of economic activity that flows through every community with a campus, center, or college presence. In FY25, the total economic impact of community college operations reached **$1.03 billion**.

Direct Operations Impact

Nebraska's community colleges spent **$524.5 million** in direct operational expenditures in FY25, encompassing everything from facility maintenance and equipment to salaries, wages, and benefits paid to faculty, staff, and student employees. These are dollars spent locally, on vendors, suppliers, contractors, and most importantly, on people. The compensation paid to community college employees represents one of the most direct and immediate forms of economic investment a public institution can make in its community. Every paycheck issued by a Nebraska community college is a dollar that enters the local economy and begins to work on behalf of the community, supporting families, sustaining households, and strengthening the financial foundation of the institutions' towns and cities.

Indirect and Induced Operations Impact

Those direct expenditures are only half the story. As community college operational dollars flow into the economy, they generate an additional **$505.8 million** in indirect and induced economic activity, nearly doubling the original investment through the natural multiplying effect of institutional spending. Vendors reinvest in their own suppliers. Employees spend their wages at businesses. Those businesses hire additional workers, who spend their own wages, and the cycle continues. The result is a powerful and underappreciated economic footprint that extends well beyond the campus, recurs annually, and touches industries and households that may never interact directly with a community college but are supported by its presence.

Jobs Supported

The employment impact is among the most striking figures of these community colleges. Nebraska's system directly supports **3,063**[2] jobs through its own payroll, faculty, administrators, support staff, and student workers employed across all six colleges and campuses. But the total employment impact reaches **11,782** jobs when indirect and induced employment is included, meaning that for every direct job created by community college operations, nearly three additional jobs are supported elsewhere in the Nebraska economy. These **8,719** indirect and induced jobs span industries including the construction trades that maintain and expand campus facilities, the food and retail businesses that serve campus communities, and the healthcare providers, accountants, and technology vendors whose services keep these institutions running. Nebraska's community colleges are among the state's largest institutional employers.

Tax Revenue Generated

The economic activity driven by community college operations also produces substantial public revenue. The operational impact of Nebraska's community colleges in FY25 generated an estimated **$51.2 million** in state and local tax revenue, funding the schools, infrastructure, and public services. This figure represents a return of more than 17 cents on every dollar the state invested in community college appropriations and does not account for the far larger tax revenue generated because of alumni earnings. It is, in the most straightforward sense, proof that the public investment in Nebraska's community colleges pays for itself and more.

[2] Direct jobs included full-time faculty and staff.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT IMPACT

$233.6 million
in total capital investment impact in FY25

$106.8 million in direct capital investment impact
$126.8 million in indirect and induced capital investment impact

2,672 total jobs
supported by capital investment

1,221 direct jobs
1,451 indirect and induced jobs

$11.4 million
in tax revenue generated by capital investment

Every time Nebraska's community colleges invest in their physical infrastructure, the economic benefits extend far beyond the building under construction or the equipment being installed. Capital investments are among the most locally concentrated forms of institutional spending, drawing on contractors, suppliers, tradespeople, and materials that are rooted in the communities surrounding each campus. In FY25, the total economic impact of Nebraska community college capital investments reached **$233.6 million**.

Direct Capital Investment Impact

The starting point of this impact is the direct investment that Nebraska's community colleges made in their physical campuses and infrastructure. In FY25, community college capital investment generated **$106.8 million** in direct economic impact, flowing immediately into the construction firms, engineering companies, equipment suppliers, and skilled tradespeople hired to carry out building projects, renovations, technology upgrades, and facility improvements across the state. These are among the most tangible dollars a public institution can spend, creating visible, lasting improvements to the communities they serve while putting Nebraskans to work.

Indirect and Induced Capital Investment Impact

The economic reach of capital spending does not stop at the construction site. As direct expenditures flow through contractors and suppliers, they trigger an additional **$126.8 million** in indirect and induced economic activity throughout the Nebraska economy as project-related spending circulates to support businesses and employment beyond the construction sector. The multiplier effect transforms every dollar of community college capital investment into an even more economic activity.

Jobs Supported

Capital investment is also a powerful creator of employment. Nebraska community college capital investment supported **2,672** jobs in FY25, with **1,221** of those being direct jobs tied to the immediate execution of construction and infrastructure projects on and around community college campuses. The remaining **1,451** indirect and induced jobs reflect the employment generated as capital dollars move through the supply chain and into the economy, from the architect who designs a new campus building to the hardware supplier who stocks the materials, to the diner owner near the job site who feeds the crew every morning.

Tax Revenue Generated

Nebraska community college capital investment also contributes measurably to the state's public revenue base, with capital spending in FY25 generating an estimated **$11.4 million** in state and local tax revenue. When combined with the tax revenue produced by operations and student spending, capital investment tax contributions reinforce a consistent and compelling pattern: Every category of community college economic activity generates public revenue that flows back into the services, infrastructure, and institutions on which Nebraskans rely every day.

STUDENT SPENDING IMPACT

$117.3 million

in total student spending impact in FY25

$65.2 million in direct student spending impact
$52.1 million in indirect and induced student spending impact

1,348 total jobs

supported by student spending

749 direct jobs
599 indirect and induced jobs

$4.7 million

in tax revenue generated by student spending

Nebraska's community college students, besides investing in their futures, fuel the economies where they live, study, and spend. Using IMPLAN to model how student spending flows through economies and quantify the ripple effect across businesses, jobs, and tax revenue throughout Nebraska, this analysis found the direct and indirect economic activity generated in FY25 by current student spending reached a combined **$117.3 million** in total economic impact.

Direct Student Spending Impact

While pursuing their education, Nebraska community college students generated **$65.2 million** in direct economic impact through everyday purchases, rent paid to landlords, groceries bought, and gas pumped, with each student bringing dollars that would otherwise never enter Nebraska's economy.

On average, out-of-state students spent **$14,900** on living expenses beyond tuition in FY25, representing a net economic import into Nebraska communities that strengthens markets and supports businesses and workers. In the smaller communities where Nebraska's community colleges are anchored, this semester-after-semester stream of student spending is one of the most dependable economic forces.

Indirect and Induced Student Spending Impact

The direct impact of $65.2 million, however, does not stop moving once it leaves a student's wallet. As those dollars flow into local businesses, they set off a chain of economic activity. The landlord uses rent payments to hire a plumber. The grocery store restocks from a regional distributor. The childcare provider spends her wages at a restaurant. These secondary transactions produced an additional **$52.1 million** in indirect and induced impacts, a multiplier effect that is a compelling argument for keeping Nebraska's community colleges strong, accessible, and fully enrolled.

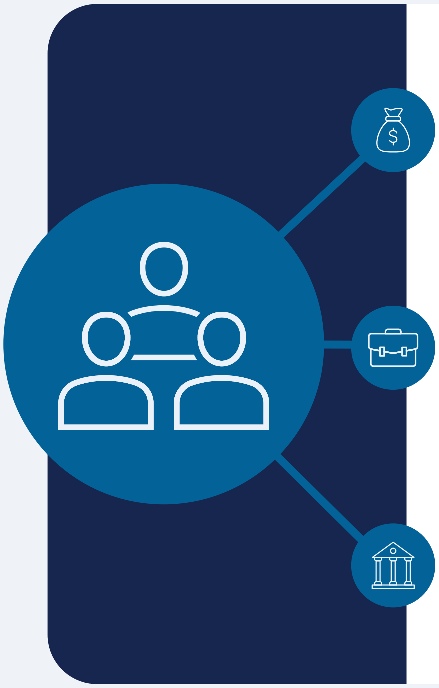
Jobs Supported

Nebraska community college student spending supports **1,348** jobs statewide, based on IMPLAN economic modeling. Of those, **749** are direct jobs, positions reinforced by the immediate, everyday spending of students in their communities. The remaining **599** are indirect and induced jobs, created as student dollars circulate through the economy and support employment in industries seemingly far removed from higher education but nonetheless connected. These are real Nebraskans: a delivery driver, a maintenance worker, a retail employee, whose paychecks are supported, in part, because a community college student needed somewhere to live, something to eat, and a way to get to class.

Tax Impact Generated

The economic activity generated by student spending benefits businesses and workers and annually strengthens the public revenue base that funds schools, roads, and essential services across Nebraska. Applying a 4% effective tax rate to the total student spending impact yields an estimated **$4.7 million** in tax revenue flowing to state and local governments as a direct result of community college student economic activity in FY25.

ALUMNI EXTRA EARNINGS IMPACT



$2.46 billion
in total alumni extra earnings impact in FY25

31,140 total jobs
supported by alumni extra earnings

$98.4 million
in tax revenue generated by alumni extra earnings

The most important economic contribution Nebraska's community colleges make is measured in careers. Every graduate who walks away with a credential, certificate, or associate degree carries a lifetime of increased earning potential that would not exist without the education they received. Multiplied across nearly two centuries of enrollment and tens of thousands of graduates, that impact becomes one of the most powerful forces shaping Nebraska's economy today.

Alumni Extra Earnings

Nebraska's community college alumni in FY25 generated an estimated **$2.46 billion** in additional annual earnings compared to what they would have earned without their community college education. That figure, representing real wages earned by Nebraskans, reflects the premium employers place on the skills, credentials, and competencies that community college graduates bring to the workforce, and it grows larger with each new class of students who complete a program and enter the labor market. These extra earnings strengthen household financial stability across Nebraska, allowing graduates to improve their standard of living, support their families, invest in homeownership, and build the kind of long-term financial security that benefits individuals and their communities.

Jobs Supported by Alumni Extra Earnings

When graduates earn more, they spend more, and that spending sustains jobs throughout the Nebraska economy. The additional income generated by Nebraska community college alumni supports an estimated **31,140 jobs** statewide across industries such as retail, healthcare, construction, and professional services. These are positions held by Nebraskans who may have no direct connection to a community college campus yet whose livelihoods are tied to the economic vitality alumni earnings help create.

Tax Revenue Generated

Higher earnings also mean higher tax contributions. The additional income earned by Nebraska community college alumni generates an estimated **$98.4 million** in state and local tax revenue annually through income, sales, and property taxes. That revenue funds the schools, roads, emergency services, and public programs on which communities across Nebraska depend.

Alumni and Nebraska's Workforce

Beyond the numbers, Nebraska's community college alumni are indispensable to the industries that define the state's economy and quality of life. Graduates have expanded Nebraska's healthcare workforce, filling critical nursing, allied health, and behavioral health roles in hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities, including in rural and medically underserved communities where the need is greatest and the pipeline of qualified workers has historically been thinnest. Others have strengthened Nebraska's manufacturing, transportation, and agricultural sectors, providing the skilled labor that keeps production lines running, goods moving, and infrastructure maintained. Still others have entered education and early childhood development, building the talent pipelines that will shape Nebraska's workforce for generations to come.

Many of these graduates have stayed in Nebraska, building lives and careers in communities where they were educated. Their higher incomes support businesses through consumer spending and homeownership. Some have advanced into leadership roles within their industries. Others have launched businesses of their own, creating jobs and economic opportunity that extend the impact of their education far beyond their own careers. Collectively, Nebraska's community college alumni are the product of an investment in higher education and the ongoing return on that investment, delivering economic and community value year after year, in every corner of the state.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

$32.1 million

in donated time and charitable giving by staff, faculty, and learners.

*Note: These benefits are in addition to the **$3.84 billion** economic impact generated by Nebraska community colleges statewide.*

Nebraska's community colleges generate measurable economic and social value through charitable giving and volunteerism by students, faculty, and staff. Beyond workforce development and alumni earnings, the colleges contribute direct community benefits through organized service initiatives, institutional giving, and thousands of volunteer hours dedicated annually to nonprofit and civic organizations.

Nebraska community colleges contribute an estimated **$32.1 million** annually in combined charitable donations and the economic value of volunteer time. In FY25, students, faculty, and staff contributed approximately **$13.8 million** in volunteer time and **$18.3 million** in monetary donations.

Across the state, students and employees regularly contribute their time and expertise through community-based learning, volunteer initiatives, and service-oriented academic programs. Community college volunteers frequently address high-priority community needs, including food insecurity, rural healthcare outreach, educational mentoring, workforce-readiness programs, disaster-response support, and nonprofit board service. Many of these activities are integrated directly into academic curricula, particularly in healthcare, education, and technical fields, where service-learning strengthens professional competencies while delivering tangible community benefits.

Nursing and allied health students participate in clinical and community placements that support hospitals, long-term care facilities, and underserved populations. In contrast, adult education and learning support programs provide tutoring and mentorship to individuals pursuing GED completion, English language learning, and workforce readiness. Students in technical and career-focused programs also contribute to community improvement initiatives that help strengthen local infrastructure and organizational capacity across Nebraska's rural and urban communities.

The economic and social returns of charitable giving and volunteerism extend well beyond the direct dollar value of contributed time and donations. Volunteer engagement strengthens nonprofit capacity, reduces operating costs for community organizations, and improves service delivery in underserved areas where resources are often limited. At the same time, students who participate in service activities develop leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and civic responsibility skills that contribute to long-term workforce readiness and persistent community engagement. In this way, the charitable contributions of Nebraska's community colleges are a reflection of institutional generosity and represent a compounding investment in the long-term vitality of Nebraska's communities.

Through charitable giving and volunteerism, the colleges deliver measurable financial benefits, reinforce the effectiveness of local organizations, and help foster stronger, more resilient communities.

RETURN ON EDUCATION INVESTMENT

Student Enrollment in FY25

Nebraska's community colleges in FY25 served a combined **61,049** students, reflecting the broad and diverse role these institutions play in expanding access to higher education across the state. Of this total, **30,089** were degree-seeking credit students, individuals pursuing credentials, certificates, or associate degrees to advance their education and career prospects. An additional **30,960** were non-degree-seeking credit students: working professionals seeking professional development, individuals pursuing industry certifications, and community members seeking targeted knowledge relevant to their personal or professional lives. The near-equal split between these two groups is a defining characteristic of Nebraska's community college system, reflecting its commitment to serving traditional academic pathways and the full spectrum of learner needs at every stage of life and career.

Cost of Attendance

For many of those 61,049 students, the decision to enroll came down to affordability. The average cost of attendance at Nebraska's community colleges is **$18,209** for FY25, encompassing tuition, fees, and estimated living expenses. This figure represents one of the most compelling aspects of the community college value proposition: access to high-quality, workforce-relevant education at a cost substantially lower than that of four-year institutions, making it achievable for a far broader cross-section of Nebraska's population. By keeping the cost of attendance within reach for working adults, first-generation students, and lower-income families, Nebraska's community colleges ensure that the economic and social benefits of higher education are not limited to those who can already afford them.

Total Current Expense and Forgone Earnings

Choosing to enroll means choosing sacrifice. The total current expense for Nebraska community college students in FY25 is estimated at **$1.2 billion**, representing the aggregate direct costs of attendance across all enrolled students, excluding interest on financial aid. But the financial commitment doesn't end there. Students collectively forgo an estimated **$3.0 billion** in earnings during their time in school, income they could have earned had they remained in the workforce full-time rather than investing that time in their education. These figures represent the true magnitude of what Nebraska students are wagering on themselves and their futures.

STUDENT'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Students: For every **$1** invested in their education, students realize **$6** in lifetime earnings.

ROI FOR STUDENTS
$6
FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED

$24.8 billion

in total increased lifetime earnings from students who were in a Nebraska community college in FY25.

Expected Earnings After Graduation

That wager pays off. Nebraska community college graduates are projected to earn an estimated **$550.8 million** in additional earnings because of their credentials, wages above and beyond what they would have earned without a community college education. This figure reflects the direct connection between the programs offered at Nebraska's community colleges and needs of the state's employers. Whether graduates enter healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, business, or the skilled trades, the earnings premium associated with their credentials begins generating economic value for themselves, their families, and their communities from the moment they enter the workforce.

Lifetime Extra Earnings, 45 Years

And the story doesn't end at graduation; it compounds. FY25 students are projected to generate a combined **$24.8 billion** in lifetime extra earnings over 45 years, reflecting the compounding wage advantage credential holders enjoy throughout their careers. Those earnings circulate through local economies, support Nebraska businesses, generate tax revenue, and strengthen communities. Decades from now, the nurse who enrolled in Omaha, the welder who signed up in Norfolk, and the business graduate from Scottsbluff will still be contributing to Nebraska's economic fabric, all because they decided to walk through the door of a community college.

Return on Investment

Measured in the language of investment, the case is unambiguous: a Nebraska community college education delivers a return of **$6**, meaning that for every **$1** a student invests, including both direct costs and forgone earnings, they can expect to receive $6 back over the course of their working life in higher wages and improved economic opportunity. This is a remarkable return by any standard, one that compares favorably to virtually any other financial decision a young Nebraskan could make. The $6 ROI encapsulates the fundamental promise of community college education: The short-term sacrifice of time and money yields transformative, measurable, and lasting rewards.

STATE'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT

State: For every **$1** invested in a community college, the public sector generates **$3** in additional tax revenues over the student's lifetime.

ROI FOR THE STATE
$3
FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED

$991.5 million

in total incremental tax revenue attributable to increased lifetime earnings from students who were in a Nebraska community college in FY25.

Nebraska's state government invested in grants and appropriations to support community colleges in FY25. This public commitment reflects the state's recognition that community college education, a private good for the individuals who attend, is also a public investment with returns flowing back to government budgets, employers, and communities across Nebraska. State appropriations help keep tuition affordable, support faculty and facilities, and ensure that community colleges can serve students in every corner of the state, including rural and underserved communities that might otherwise lack access to higher education opportunities.

Added Tax Revenue from Lifetime Earnings

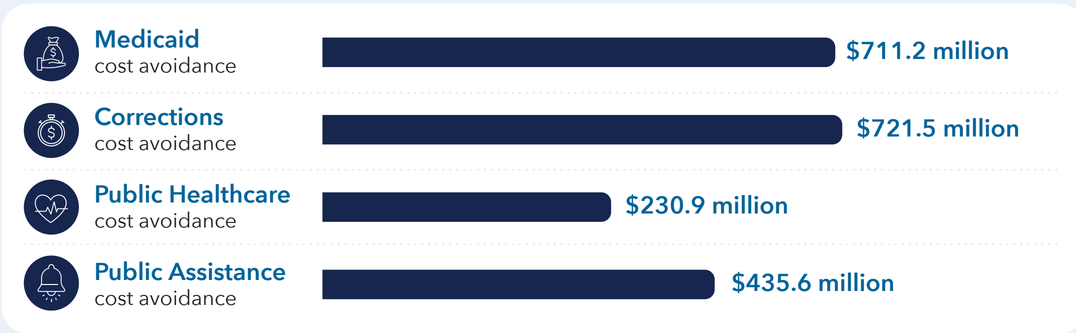
That public investment delivers a measurable return. Applying a 4% effective tax rate to the projected lifetime extra earnings of FY25 community college students yields an estimated **$991.5 million** in additional tax revenue flowing back to state and local governments over those students' working lives. These are tax dollars generated directly by the higher wages that community college credentials make possible, revenue that funds schools, roads, public safety, and the full range of government services on which Nebraskans depend. In this sense, investing in community college education is one of the most reliable mechanisms available to the state for growing its long-term tax base without raising rates.

Taxpayer Return on Investment

From the taxpayer's perspective, the return on Nebraska's public investment in community colleges is equally compelling. For every dollar the state appropriates for community college education, taxpayers can expect to see **$3** returned through increased tax revenues and reduced public expenditures on programs such as Medicaid, corrections, and public assistance. This $3 taxpayer ROI reframes community college funding not as a cost to be managed but as an investment to be maximized. It provides policymakers with a clear, evidence-based rationale for continuing to offer growing support for Nebraska's community college system.

PUBLIC SECTOR COST AVOIDANCE

$2.1 billion
in estimated reductions in public expenditures attributable to educational attainment over the working lifetime of Nebraska community college students from FY25.



Over the working lifetimes of students enrolled in FY25, Nebraska community college graduates and completers are projected to generate **$2.1 billion** in total public-sector cost avoidance. When individuals earn credentials and enter higher-wage employment, they become less reliant on publicly funded programs, generating fiscal relief that ripples across multiple areas of state budgets for decades. These figures represent a return on public investment in higher education and a compelling, data-driven argument for sustaining and expanding access to community college programs across Nebraska.

Medicaid Cost Avoidance

One of the major long-term fiscal benefits of community college education is its impact on healthcare-related public expenditures, particularly Medicaid. Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment are statistically more likely to secure employment that includes employer-sponsored health insurance, reducing or eliminating their reliance on state-funded Medicaid coverage. Beyond insurance access, research consistently shows that more educated individuals engage more regularly in preventive healthcare, maintain healthier behaviors, and experience better long-term health outcomes, all of which reduce the frequency and cost of medical interventions covered by public programs. For Nebraska, this translates into **$711.2 million** in projected Medicaid savings over the working lifetime of FY25 community college students. As enrollment in Nebraska's community colleges continues to grow and more residents earn credentials, the downstream impact on Medicaid expenditures becomes increasingly impactful. Investing in community college access is a direct investment in the long-term sustainability of the state's healthcare budget.

Corrections Cost Avoidance

The connection between educational attainment and reduced involvement in the criminal justice system is one of the most robust findings in public policy research. Individuals who complete postsecondary credentials are less likely to be arrested, convicted, or incarcerated than those without them, a pattern driven by improved employment prospects, higher wages, and greater economic stability. Incarceration carries an enormous price tag for state governments, encompassing the direct costs of housing and supervising inmates, the administrative infrastructure of the corrections system, and the long-term expenses associated with supervision, recidivism, and reentry programming. Community colleges serve as one of the most cost-effective crime prevention tools available to the state. The projected **$721.5 million** in corrections cost avoidance reflects the cumulative impact of fewer Nebraskans entering or cycling through the corrections system over their lifetimes, a profound social and fiscal return on the public dollars invested in community college education.

Public Healthcare Cost Avoidance

While Medicaid represents the most direct line between education and healthcare savings, community college attainment also produces broader reductions across publicly subsidized healthcare expenditures. Individuals without stable employment and adequate income are far more likely to seek care in emergency departments, rely on uncompensated care, or use community health resources funded by local and state governments. These costs, often invisible in discussions of healthcare budgets but extensive in aggregate, are substantially reduced as more Nebraskans gain credentials, secure stable employment, and access private health coverage. The projected **$230.9 million** in public healthcare cost avoidance reflects these systemic savings, capturing the reduced burden on publicly funded health infrastructure that results when a greater share of the population achieves economic self-sufficiency through education.

Public Assistance Cost Avoidance

Safety net programs such as SNAP, TANF, housing assistance, and childcare subsidies play a vital role in supporting Nebraska families during economic hardship. However, long-term reliance on these programs imposes a substantial and ongoing cost on state and federal budgets. Educational attainment is one of the most reliable pathways out of public assistance dependency. As individuals earn credentials and move into higher-wage careers, their need for supplemental support decreases measurably. Nebraska's community colleges directly accelerate this transition by equipping students with the skills and qualifications needed to compete for better-paying jobs and achieve lasting financial stability. The projected **$435.6 million** in public assistance cost avoidance reflects the cumulative reduction in caseloads and benefit expenditures that results from FY25 community college students achieving greater earning power over their working lives. These savings compound, producing growing relief for state and local budgets and reinforcing community college education as one of Nebraska's most effective long-term economic development strategies.

APPENDIX A
Definition of Terms

Study Year	FY25 represents the period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. For Nebraska community colleges, data were supplied for FY25.
Total Economic Impact	The combined direct, indirect, and induced impacts across the economy generated by Nebraska community colleges.
Direct Economic Impact	Spending by Nebraska community colleges, their employees, students, and visitors.
Indirect Economic Impact	Re-spending by vendors and suppliers that provide goods and services to Nebraska community colleges.
Induced Economic Impact	Household spending by employees whose wages are tied to Nebraska community colleges that drives activity in housing, retail, food services, and other services.
Multiplier Effect	The added economic activity created when Nebraska community colleges' direct spending circulates through local businesses and households.
Direct Employment	The total number of jobs directly supported by Nebraska community colleges, including faculty, staff, professionals, administrative staff, and operations personnel. Part-time and student employees are excluded.
Indirect Employment	Additional jobs created through Nebraska community colleges' spending with vendors and suppliers. As these local businesses expand to meet demand, they hire more employees, generating a ripple effect across industries such as construction, transportation, and professional services.
Induced Employment	Jobs supported when Nebraska community colleges' employees, vendors, and suppliers spend their earnings in the local economy. This household spending supports employment in sectors such as retail, dining, housing, hospitality, and other community services.
State and Local Tax Impact	Government revenue generated at the state and local levels through the operations of Nebraska community colleges. This includes taxes paid directly by the organization, as well as those generated through employee wages, household spending, and purchases made by vendors and suppliers that support Nebraska community colleges.

APPENDIX B
Methodology

This report measures the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts generated by Nebraska's community colleges during FY25. The analysis captures the economic activity associated with the colleges' ongoing operations, workforce development role, and community engagement across the state. The impacts evaluated in this study fall within the following categories:

- **Business Volume Impacts:** Capital investment, operating expenditures, and payroll associated with community college operations.
- **Student and Employee Spending:** Off-campus expenditures on goods and services such as housing, food, transportation, childcare, retail, and hospitality.
- **Employment Impacts:** Direct employment at the community colleges, as well as indirect and induced jobs supported through supplier activity and household spending.
- **State and Local Tax Impacts:** State and local tax revenues generated through college operations and related economic activity.
- **Alumni Extra Earnings Impact:** The contribution of community college graduates to Nebraska's economy through higher earnings attributable to their education, which support additional jobs, generate increased state and local tax revenues, and strengthen household income and economic stability across the state.
- **Community Impacts:** The economic value of employee and student charitable donations and volunteer activity.

This economic impact analysis measures the combined direct, indirect, and induced economic, employment, and state and local tax impacts associated with Nebraska's six community colleges and their campuses, programs, and service areas. Collectively, these institutions operate as locally embedded public assets that support economic activity throughout both urban and rural regions of the state.

Economic impact begins when an organization spends money. Studies measuring economic impact capture both the direct impacts of institutional spending and the additional rounds of spending that occur as dollars circulate through the economy. This analysis uses the IMPLAN (IMpact Analysis for PLANning) modeling system to estimate these impacts. Primary data used in the analysis were collected directly from Nebraska's community colleges (Central, Metropolitan, Mid-Plains, Northeast, Southeast, and Western Nebraska) and include capital expenditures (five-year average), operating expenditures, employment headcounts, payroll and benefits, taxes, and selected student and employee spending inputs for FY25.

The multipliers applied in this study were derived from industry-standard IMPLAN software. Tripp Umbach's methodology is intentionally conservative, relying on established economic modeling techniques and cautious assumptions regarding individual spending behavior. Where applicable, spending assumptions are informed by federal per diem rates and adjusted to reflect Nebraska-specific economic conditions.

The total economic impact reflects the dollars generated in Nebraska by the presence and activities of the community colleges. This includes in-state spending on goods and services, as well as the economic activity generated by businesses, employees, students, and alumni connected to the colleges. Spending that occurs outside Nebraska, such as purchases from out-of-state vendors, is excluded from the impact totals to ensure that results reflect only impacts retained within the state economy.

IMPLAN is an econometric input-output modeling system developed by applied economists at the University of Minnesota and the U.S. Forest Service. It has been in continuous use since 1979 and is widely employed by private consulting firms, academic institutions, and government agencies. IMPLAN integrates data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and other federal sources to model trade flows between industries and households, allowing analysts to estimate how changes in economic activity affect a defined geographic area. For this study, IMPLAN's Regional Economic Accounts and Social Accounting Matrices were used to construct state- and regional-level multipliers relevant to Nebraska. These multipliers describe how spending by community colleges, their employees, and students generates additional economic activity, which eventually "leaks" out of the state. IMPLAN explicitly accounts for such leakage based on workforce composition, supplier availability, and regional purchasing patterns, ensuring that only Nebraska-specific impacts are included.

The model also accounts for substitution and displacement impacts by applying multipliers deflated below national benchmark levels. Multipliers are applied only to personal disposable income, yielding more realistic estimates of induced economic impacts. IMPLAN excludes imports to the economic area by applying Regional Purchase Coefficients (RPCs), which estimate the share of goods and services likely to be purchased within Nebraska, based on observed trade flows and regional economic characteristics.

Employment Definitions

Employment impacts in this analysis are measured in terms of jobs (both full-time and part-time), not full-time equivalents (FTEs). Both full-time and part-time positions generate economic activity and support additional indirect and induced employment throughout Nebraska. Each community college provided employment data and included all individuals receiving compensation, such as faculty, staff, student employees, and, where applicable, contracted personnel.

State and Local Tax Impact Definition

State and local tax impacts include all taxes paid to Nebraska state and local governments that are attributable to community college operations and related economic activity. These include payroll-related taxes, sales and use taxes, property-related taxes, unemployment taxes, and other applicable state and local taxes. Federal taxes are excluded from this analysis.

Community Impacts

Community impacts quantified in this report include two primary forms: charitable donations and volunteer service provided by community college employees and students.

Tripp Umbach utilizes survey-based research to estimate annual charitable giving by faculty, staff, and students. Donation levels vary by individual and are adjusted to reflect each individual's participation rate.

The value of volunteer service is estimated using the Independent Sector's $34.79-per-hour valuation. This value is applied based on survey-informed assumptions regarding participation rates and average annual volunteer hours among community college employees and students.

Together, these components provide a comprehensive and conservative estimate of the economic and community value generated by Nebraska's community colleges during FY25.

APPENDIX C
Education and Earnings

One of the most well-documented relationships in labor economics is the connection between educational attainment and earning power. The following data, generated through earnings modeling and benchmarking using multiple data sources, including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, illustrates the tangible wage premium associated with each level of educational credential, from less than a high school diploma through a doctoral or professional degree. These figures served as the foundation for two key analyses in this report: the return-on-investment calculations, which reflect the lifetime earnings premium of Nebraska community college students, and the alumni extra-earnings impact, which measures the additional annual income generated by the system's graduates currently active in the workforce.

For Nebraska's community colleges, the associate's degree row is particularly notable. A worker with an associate's degree earns approximately $177 more per week and nearly $9,194 more per year than a high school diploma holder in inflation-adjusted dollars, a difference that compounds tangibly over a 45-year career. Compared to a worker without a high school diploma, that annual gap widens to $19,641 in additional earnings every single year. These are not abstract figures. They represent real and recurring increases in household income flowing into Nebraska families, businesses, and tax bases as a direct result of the educational investment Nebraska's community colleges make possible every semester.

Table 3: Educational Level and Earnings

Education Level	Weekly Earnings	Annual Earnings	Annual Earnings Above High School Diploma
Doctoral Degree	$2,383	$123,939	+$73,340
Professional Degree	$2,472	$128,563	+$77,964
Master's Degree	$1,925	$100,109	+$49,510
Bachelor's Degree	$1,614	$83,950	+$33,351
Associate's Degree	**$1,150**	**$59,793**	**+$9,194**
High School Diploma	$973	$50,599	
Less Than High School	$772	$40,152	-$10,447

Source: *Tripp Umbach generated earnings modeling through benchmarking using multiple data sources, including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

APPENDIX D

Methodology for Public Sector Cost Avoidance

To estimate lifetime public-sector cost avoidance, Tripp Umbach applied an established benchmarking methodology, drawing on resources including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), as well as peer-reviewed research on the fiscal impacts of postsecondary educational attainment. Using these inputs, public sector cost avoidance estimates were projected for FY25 community college students pursuing and completing an associate's degree, capturing the anticipated reduction in public expenditures attributable to that level of educational attainment over the course of a working lifetime. Key categories of savings include Medicaid, public assistance and social services, public healthcare, and corrections and incarceration.

By modeling the expected outcomes linked to associate's degree attainment and applying component-level savings across each expenditure category, Tripp Umbach estimated the total lifetime public cost avoidance attributable to the educational investment made by FY25 students. All present-value estimates were converted to current dollars using the CPI-U, ensuring that the projected savings reflect present-value lifetime benefits that are comparable and compelling in today's economic context. The figures presented in this section represent lifetime public cost savings per associate's degree graduate and form the basis for estimating total lifetime cost avoidance across Nebraska's community college student population. These projections demonstrate how investment in associate's degree education generates measurable and lasting economic and social returns that extend well beyond the individual student, reducing demand on public programs and strengthening the long-term fiscal health of Nebraska's communities and state government.

APPENDIX E

Tripp Umbach Qualifications

Founded in Pittsburgh, PA, and now headquartered in Kansas City, MO, Tripp Umbach is recognized as the nation's leading private consulting firm specializing in economic and community development. For 35 years, the firm has partnered with more than 1,000 healthcare, education, government, and corporate clients to measure, plan, and advance the economic, social, and physical well-being of communities worldwide. Tripp Umbach has completed more than 500 economic impact studies for higher education institutions across the United States, as well as community assessments and economic development strategies. As a pioneer in developing economic impact analysis in the 1980s, Tripp Umbach is the most respected and trusted provider of university impact studies.

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