

# The Economic Value of the Riverside Community College District





**T**HE RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (RCCD)<sup>1</sup> 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 region, generating new dollars and opportunities for the RCCD Service Area.<sup>2</sup> 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.

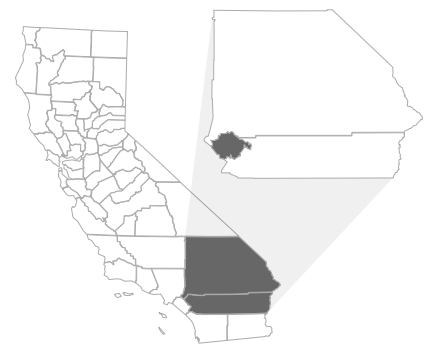
RCCD influences both the lives of students and the regional economy. The colleges support a variety of industries in the RCCD Service Area, serve regional businesses, and benefit society as a whole in California from an expanded economy and improved quality of life. Additionally, the benefits created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

This study measures the economic impacts created by RCCD 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 RCCD, for fiscal year (FY) 2023-24. Impacts on the RCCD Service Area 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 California are reported under the investment analysis.



**The RCCD Service Area  
(in San Bernardino and  
Riverside Counties, CA)**

RCCD influences both  
the **lives of students** and  
the **regional economy**.

<sup>1</sup> The Riverside Community College District consists of Moreno Valley College, Norco College, and Riverside City College.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, the RCCD Service Area is comprised of the following 40 zip codes in Riverside and San Bernadino Counties: 91708, 91752, 92503, 92505, 92860, 92877, 92878, 92879, 92880, 92881, 92882, 92883, 92508, 92518, 92551, 92552, 92553, 92554, 92555, 92556, 92557, 92570, 92571, 92599, 92313, 92316, 92324, 92337, 92501, 92502, 92504, 92506, 92507, 92509, 92514, 92516, 92517, 92519, 92521, and 92522.

# Economic impact analysis



RCCD promotes economic growth in the RCCD Service Area through its direct expenditures and the resulting expenditures of students and regional 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 the RCCD Service Area, whose expenditures benefit regional vendors. In addition, the colleges are primary sources of higher education to RCCD Service Area residents and suppliers of trained workers to regional industries, enhancing overall productivity in the regional workforce.

## Operations spending impact



RCCD adds economic value to the RCCD Service Area as an employer of regional residents and a large-scale buyer of goods and services. In FY 2023-24, the colleges employed 3,670 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, 50% of whom lived in the RCCD Service Area. Total payroll at RCCD was \$323.8 million, much of which was spent in the region for groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. In addition, the colleges spent \$201.8 million on expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services (excluding construction).

RCCD's operations spending added \$408.4 million in income to the region during the analysis year. This figure represents the colleges' payroll, the multiplier effects generated by the in-region spending of the colleges and their employees, and a downward adjustment to account for funding that the colleges received from regional sources. The \$408.4 million in added income is equivalent to supporting 4,511 jobs in the region.

## Construction spending impact



RCCD invests in construction 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 regional economy. In FY 2023-24, RCCD's construction spending generated \$14.4 million in added income, which is equivalent to supporting 149 jobs.

Impacts created by  
RCCD in FY 2023-24



Operations spending impact

**\$408.4 million**

+



Construction spending impact

**\$14.4 million**

+



Student spending impact

**\$153.3 million**

+



Alumni impact

**\$603.9 million**



Total economic impact

**\$1.2 billion**

OR



Jobs supported

**15,756**





## Student spending impact



Around 24% of students attending RCCD originated from outside the region in FY 2023-24, and some of these students relocated to the RCCD Service Area to attend the colleges. These students may not have come to the region if the colleges did not exist. In addition, some in-region students, referred to as retained students, would have left the RCCD Service Area if not for the existence of RCCD. While attending the colleges, these relocated and retained students spent money on groceries, accommodation, transportation, and other household expenses. This spending generated \$153.3 million in added income for the regional economy in FY 2023-24, which supported 2,388 jobs in the RCCD Service Area.

## Alumni impact



The education and training the colleges provide for regional residents has the greatest impact. Since the colleges were established, students have studied at RCCD and entered the regional workforce with greater knowledge and new skills. Today, hundreds of thousands of former RCCD students are employed in the RCCD Service Area. As a result of their education from RCCD, the students receive higher earnings and increase the productivity of the businesses that employ them. In FY 2023-24, RCCD alumni generated \$603.9 million in added income for the regional economy, which is equivalent to supporting 8,708 jobs.

## Total impact

RCCD added \$1.2 billion in income to the RCCD Service Area 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 \$1.2 billion impact was equal to approximately 1.9% of the total gross regional product (GRP) of the RCCD Service Area. This contribution that the colleges provided on their own was almost as large as the entire Information industry in the region.

RCCD's total impact can also be expressed in terms of jobs supported. The \$1.2 billion impact supported 15,756 regional jobs, using the jobs-to-sales ratios specific to each industry in the region. This means that one out of every 44 jobs in the RCCD Service Area is supported by the activities of the colleges and their students. In addition, the \$1.2 billion, or 15,756 supported jobs, stemmed from different industry sectors. For instance, among non-education industry sectors, the spending of RCCD and its students and the activities of alumni in the Health Care & Social Assistance industry sector supported 1,899 jobs in FY 2023-24. If the colleges did not exist, these impacts would not have been generated in the RCCD Service Area.

### RCCD's impact by industry (jobs supported)



1,899

Accommodation & Food Services



1,668

Health Care & Social Assistance



1,462

Other Services (except Public Administration)



1,174

Construction



1,171

Professional & Technical Services


**One out of every 44 jobs** in the RCCD Service Area is supported by the activities of the colleges and their students.

# Investment analysis



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

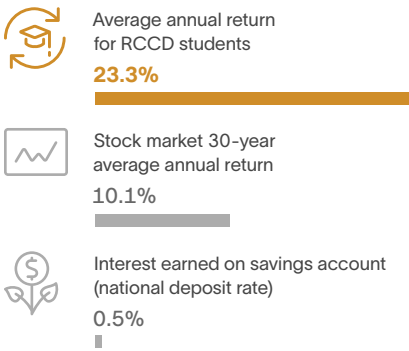
## Student perspective

 In FY 2023-24, RCCD served 64,039 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 RCCD students in FY 2023-24 amounted to a present value of \$149.0 million, equal to \$56.2 million in out-of-pocket expenses (including future principal and interest on student loans) and \$92.7 million in forgone time and money.

In return for their investment, RCCD's students will receive a stream of higher future earnings that will continue to grow throughout their working lives. For example, the average RCCD associate degree graduate from FY 2023-24 will see annual earnings \$8,800 higher than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in California. Over a working lifetime, the benefits of the associate degree over a high school diploma will amount to an undiscounted value of \$369.6 thousand in higher earnings per graduate. The present value of the cumulative higher future earnings that RCCD's FY 2023-24 students will receive over their working careers is \$1.3 billion.

The students' benefit-cost ratio is 8.7. In other words, for every dollar students invest in an education at RCCD in the form of out-of-pocket expenses and forgone time and money, they will receive a cumulative value of \$8.70 in higher future earnings. Annually, the students' investment in RCCD has an average annual internal rate of return of 23.3%, which is impressive compared to the U.S. stock market's 30-year average rate of return of 10.1%.

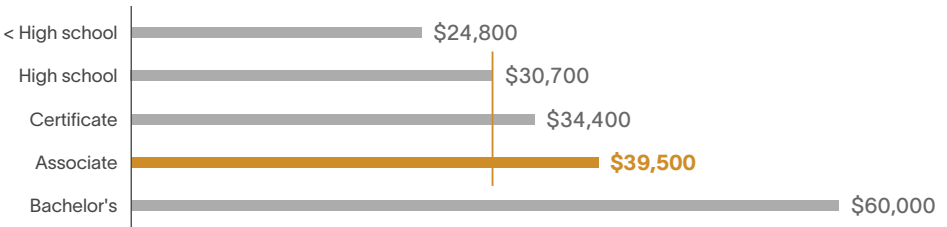
### Students see a high rate of return for their investment in RCCD



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 RCCD will see an increase in earnings of **\$8,800** each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in California.



Source: Lightcast employment data

## Taxpayer perspective



RCCD 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 RCCD'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 \$465.9 million in added taxes.

Benefits to taxpayers will also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of students attending RCCD and the corresponding reduced government services. Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes. The education that RCCD 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. RCCD'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 RCCD for a copy of the main report. Altogether, the present value of the benefits associated with an education through RCCD will generate \$99.6 million in savings to state and local taxpayers.

Total taxpayer benefits amount to \$565.5 million, the present value sum of the added tax revenue and public sector savings. Taxpayer costs are \$411.2 million, equal to the amount of state and local government funding RCCD 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 RCCD 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 2.3%, which compares favorably to other long-term investments in the public sector.

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

## Social perspective



Society as a whole in California benefits from the presence of RCCD 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 California.

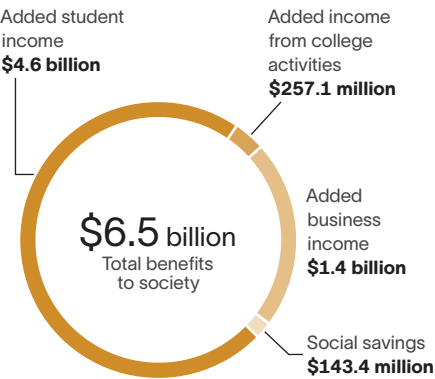
Benefits to society also consist of the savings generated by the improved lifestyles of RCCD's students. As discussed in the previous section, education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes that generate social savings. Note that these costs are avoided by the consumers but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

Altogether, the social benefits of RCCD equal a present value of \$6.5 billion. These benefits include \$4.6 billion in added student income, \$1.4 billion in added business income, \$257.1 million in added income from college activities, as well as \$143.4 million in social savings related to health, the justice system, and income assistance in California. People in California invested a present value total of \$684.5 million in RCCD in FY 2023-24. The cost includes all the colleges’ expenditures and student costs.

The benefit-cost ratio for society is 9.5, equal to the \$6.5 billion in benefits divided by the \$684.5 million in costs. In other words, for every dollar invested in RCCD, people in California will receive a cumulative value of \$9.50 in benefits. The benefits of this investment will occur for as long as RCCD’s FY 2023-24 students remain employed in the state workforce.

Social benefits in California from RCCD






Source: Lightcast impact model

Summary of investment analysis results

The results of the analysis demonstrate that RCCD 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 RCCD. At the same time, taxpayers’ investment in RCCD returns more to government budgets than it costs and creates a wide range of social benefits throughout California.

Summary of investment analysis results

 Student perspective		 Taxpayer perspective		 Social perspective	
Present value benefits \$1.3 billion		Present value benefits \$565.5 million		Present value benefits \$6.5 billion	
Present value costs \$0.15 billion		Present value costs \$411.2 million		Present value costs \$0.69 billion	
Net present value \$1.1 billion		Net present value \$154.3 million		Net present value \$5.8 billion	
Benefit-cost ratio	Rate of return	Benefit-cost ratio	Rate of return	Benefit-cost ratio	Rate of return
8.7	23.3%	1.4	2.3%	9.5	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 RCCD creates value from **multiple perspectives**.*

The colleges benefit regional businesses by increasing consumer spending in the region and supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers to the workforce. RCCD 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, RCCD benefits society as a whole in California 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 RCCD, 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 system 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.