



KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Kansas Community Colleges make economic impact and drive workforce development

A recent economic impact report of the Kansas community college system revealed an annual \$700 million dollar impact in the region, representing a \$2.50 return for every dollar invested in southeast Kansas. Community Colleges across Kansas teamed up with Lightcast, a leading company specializing in labor market analytics and economic impact to conduct a comprehensive economic impact study of Kansas Community Colleges. The goal was clear: to answer crucial questions about the colleges' role in shaping the Kansas workforce, the colleges' influence on the state's economic health, and the overall return on investment for students, taxpayers, and society.

"The economic impact of Kansas community colleges is significant and the workforce development provided by each college across the state of Kansas is vital to a prosperous Kansas economy," said Heather Morgan, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Community Colleges "This study provided insights into how Kansas community colleges contribute not only to individual student success but also to the broader prosperity of our state."

The results of the study are nothing short of remarkable. **In the fiscal year 2021-22, Kansas community colleges were found to have made a staggering \$6.7 billion impact on the state's economy.** "Expressed in terms of jobs, the direct and indirect impact from all Kansas community colleges supported 106,234 jobs this last year," explained Dr. Bruce Moses, President of Allen County Community College. "In terms of impact, that's substantial!"

The study found that the impact of Kansas community colleges is not solely economic but is also personal. **For every dollar a student invests in their education at a Kansas community college, there is a notable increase in earnings over their working lives— a return of \$9.40 for every dollar invested.**

Dr. Marlon Thornburg, President of Coffeyville Community College emphasized, "Community colleges are the catalysts for turning learning into tangible, employable skills. They play a pivotal role in empowering individuals with practical technical skills which are the backbone of a thriving workforce."

The positive impacts of Kansas community colleges also extend to taxpayers and the society at large. **Taxpayers experience a significant return of \$2.20 in added tax revenue and public sector savings for every dollar invested in students' education.** Society reaps the rewards of added income and social cost savings of \$9.20 for every dollar spent by students because of improved economic conditions which correlate to healthcare savings, justice system savings, and savings on social safety net programs.

Southeast Kansas Community Colleges: A Closer Look

The economic impact study also revealed information about each individual college. In the southeast region of the state, the study focused on Allen, Coffeyville, Independence, Labette, Fort Scott, and Neosho community colleges. The results were not only impressive but highlighted the localized impact these institutions have on their communities and the southeast Kansas region. "The southeast Kansas community colleges have a higher economic impact than the state average in terms of return on investment for local taxpayers", said Fort Scott President Dr. Jason Kegler. **The average taxpayers' return on**

investment for southeast Kansas community colleges is \$2.50 for every dollar invested which is higher than the average across the state.

Independence Community College President, Dr. Vincent Bowhay explained, "Our financial allocations are strategically directed within our greater communities, emphasizing the utilization of local resources. Our commitment involves a long-lasting reinvestment of financial resources back into our supporting communities, fostering a cycle of economic development and prosperity."

Last fiscal year, the six Southeast Kansas community colleges each supported an average of 209 direct jobs and each college supported an additional 1,927 indirect jobs, showcasing a broader impact on the local workforce. **When combined Southeast Kansas community colleges support directly and indirectly over 12,000 jobs in the region. The total average economic impact of each college amounted to more than \$112 million per college which when combined produced an economic impact across the southeast Kansas region of nearly \$700 million dollars.** Dr. Mark Watkins, President of Labette Community College, emphasized the critical role community colleges play in addressing the shortage of healthcare professionals, stating, "Through focused initiatives and specialized training, these colleges are actively closing the healthcare gap, ensuring trained medical professionals are available in every corner of our rural Kansas communities."

Notably, individuals with associate degrees obtained at the Southeast Kansas community colleges earned an average annual income of \$49,450. "This economic impact study underscores the far-reaching influence and value of investing in education at Kansas community colleges," concluded Dr. Brian Inbody, President of Neosho County Community College. "These institutions not only shape the workforce and support businesses in our communities and across our region but also serve as catalysts for individual success, economic prosperity, and the overall well-being of the communities we serve."