



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Office of Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia

Julie McCluskie, 720-633-5658 c, julie.mccluskie@state.co.us

Nancy Mitchell, 303-478-4573 c, nancy.mitchell@dhe.state.co.us

Lt. Gov. Garcia releases College Measures website with first-year earnings of Colorado's college graduates

DENVER – Wednesday, March 13, 2013 – Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia today released the Colorado Department of Higher Education and College Measures website (collegemeasures.org/esm/colorado) and final report, “Higher Education Pays: The Initial Earnings of Graduates from Colorado’s Colleges and Universities Working in Colorado.”

The College Measures website makes publicly available the median first-year earnings of recent graduates from two-year and four-year institutions across the state who are working in Colorado one year after obtaining their degrees or certificates. The primary purpose of this tool is to provide prospective students and their families with important information when selecting an institution of higher education, a major/field of study and level of degree.

“A look at the College Measures website makes one point undeniably clear - an investment in a college degree is an investment that pays off. Students who finish with either a bachelor’s or an associate’s degree earn more than students who enter the labor market with a high school diploma,” said Garcia. “Most importantly, College Measures is a one-of-a-kind tool for students evaluating the career-earnings potential of a wide array of majors and degrees at institutions in Colorado.”

Key findings in the report include:

- Students earning a career-oriented Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS) degree are entering the labor market with skills that are in demand. These students’ average first-year earnings are almost \$7,000 more than graduates of bachelor’s degree programs across the state.
- The median first-year earnings of bachelor’s degree recipients is around \$39,000 statewide.

- For bachelor's degrees, in general, graduates in health and business earn more than graduates with liberal arts degrees.
- Graduates with the AAS degree earn, on average, about \$15,000 more than students who completed the Associate of Arts degree or Associate of Sciences degree.

“The information Colorado is providing gives students options so they can decide which college or university best prepares them for the careers and lives they want,” said Mark Schneider, the president of College Measures and a vice president of the American Institutes for Research. “That decision involves how much debt is realistic to take on as an investment in the future. This is information that’s useful, usable and will be used.”

College Measures makes available earnings for approximately 61,800 graduates - or 26 percent of all Colorado higher education graduates between 2006 and 2010 - by institution, type of degree and major. The report includes those graduates employed in Colorado at or above Colorado’s minimum wage. The website and report do not include graduates who left the state after earning a credential, went to work for the federal government or are self-employed. It also does not include students who continued their education in graduate school or another program. And graduates included may not have found employment their major or field of study.

Find the College Measures website at collegemeasures.org/esm/colorado. For a copy of the report, “Higher Education Pays: The Initial Earnings of Graduates from Colorado’s Colleges and Universities Working in Colorado,” [click here](#) or visit <http://highered.colorado.gov/publications/reports/wage/20130313-ESM.pdf>. A two-page overview of the report is available [here](#) or visit http://highered.colorado.gov/publications/reports/wage/20130313_CM_overview.pdf

###

About College Measures

College Measures is a partnership between the American Institutes for Research and Matrix Knowledge Group, focused on using data to drive improvement in higher education outcomes in the United States. Data warehouses exist at the school, state and national levels, and hold a powerful amount of information that can be presented in ways that are compelling to users. Funded with the support of the Lumina Foundation, College Measures is assisting state agencies in their efforts to make information about the earnings of graduates from their higher education programs publicly accessible. These data, dubbed “Economic Success Metrics,” show that the degree a student earns, and where they earn it, matters. College Measures’ goal is to move the information out of these data warehouses and into "data storefronts" in which performance metrics will be placed into the public square, allowing students, their families and policymakers to get much better measures of the rate of return on their investment in higher education programs and institutions.