

# Understanding the Value of a Colorado Credential

## Median Wage Outcomes by Program Grouping

Some form of postsecondary education after high school completion can have a dramatic impact on an individual's earning potential over the course of their life. Research by the Social Security Administration shows that median lifetime earnings for those with some type of postsecondary credential can be more than \$1 million higher than those of a high school graduate.

Colorado has a long history of tracking the wage outcomes for individual credential programs. Through collaboration between state agencies, CDHE calculates the median one-year, five-year and 10-year earnings outcomes for completers of postsecondary credentials in Colorado. These calculations show the impact that postsecondary education can have on an individual's earning potential.



### Median Wage Outcomes by Program

#### Certificate

Time to Credential **2.04 YEARS** | Credits at Credential **25.29**

Earnings by Credential Type and Program Grouping

	1-YEAR Median wage outcome	5-YEAR Median wage outcome	10-YEAR Median wage outcome
Arts, Humanities and Communication	\$25,325	\$33,082	\$37,186
Business	\$38,928	\$42,272	\$47,237
Education	\$23,806	\$28,835	\$24,009
Health	\$26,084	\$38,861	\$46,200
Science, Technology, Engineering and Math	\$38,822	\$44,890	\$48,832
Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services	\$28,323	\$36,884	\$40,014
Trades	\$39,734	\$48,221	\$58,422

#### Associates

Time to Credential **3.94 YEARS** | Credits at Credential **66.73**

Earnings by Credential Type and Program Grouping

	1-YEAR Median wage outcome	5-YEAR Median wage outcome	10-YEAR Median wage outcome
Arts, Humanities and Communication	\$29,168	\$40,195	\$46,122
Business	\$35,404	\$42,765	\$46,845
Education	\$24,384	\$26,704	\$30,471
Health	\$51,048	\$57,815	\$64,922
Science, Technology, Engineering and Math	\$40,346	\$48,657	\$55,262
Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services	\$28,102	\$35,944	\$37,004
Trades	\$40,284	\$53,150	\$64,637



## Median Wage Outcomes by Program

### Bachelor's

Time to Credential **4.66 YEARS** | Credits at Credential **134.67**

#### Earnings by Credential Type and Program Grouping

	1-YEAR Median wage outcome	5-YEAR Median wage outcome	10-YEAR Median wage outcome
	\$37,364	\$49,351	\$60,370
<b>Arts, Humanities and Communication</b>	\$29,634	\$42,507	\$50,092
<b>Business</b>	\$43,363	\$57,101	72,448
<b>Education</b>	\$34,218	\$40,320	\$45,152
<b>Health</b>	\$55,231	\$59,954	\$66,651
<b>Science, Technology, Engineering and Math</b>	\$43,420	\$60,049	\$76,054
<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services</b>	\$29,988	\$44,389	\$52,926
<b>Trades</b>	\$37,723	\$50,489	\$60,156



Beyond economic gains, postsecondary education yields individual and societal benefits.

For individuals, research suggests that people who earn postsecondary credentials have more social mobility, better health outcomes and greater life expectancy. They are also significantly less likely to interact with the criminal justice system and much more likely to volunteer and/or be civically engaged. For society, citizens who earn a postsecondary credential contribute more tax dollars to the local and state economy and are less likely to be dependent on government assistance programs.



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### For More Information

Colorado Department of Higher Education  
<https://highered.colorado.gov/>

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development  
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