WORKFORCE PREPARATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES
MEDIAN WAGE BEFORE AND AFTER DEGREE BY FIELD OF STUDY WITHIN AWARD TYPE: CALIFORNIA

Median annual earnings two years before, two years after and five years after degree or certificate completion, by field of study within award type.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS

CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE APPROVED CERTIFICATE RECIPIENTS

LOCALLY APPROVED CERTIFICATE RECIPIENTS
What Is Measured?
Median annual earnings two years before, two years after and five years after degree or certificate completion, by field of study within award type.

Who Is Counted?
Associate degree graduates and certificate completers in California who finished their degrees/certificates between 2003-04 and 2007-08

What It Tells Us
There was wide variation in the wages and wage gains among selected popular associate degree programs in California. Registered nursing graduates experienced the largest gains in median wages: from $21,055 two years before degree receipt to $75,985 and $82,729 two and five years after. Child development/early care and education graduates experienced the smallest gains in median wages: from $16,266 two years before degree receipt to $21,844 and $23,185 two and five years after.

Why It’s Important
Many students enroll in community colleges to gain new skills so that they can improve their employment prospects. Numerous studies have found that median earnings for individuals with associate degrees are higher than median earnings for high school graduates. Even individuals who attend community college but do not complete a degree have higher earnings than those whose education stops at high school. Fewer studies have examined vocational certificates at the national level, but their results are consistent with the research on associate degrees, with certificate recipients showing a substantial advantage in earnings.

ABOUT THE DATA
Data are reported in five-year cohorts; the cohort reported here draws from students who graduated between the 2003-04 and 2007-08 academic years.

Wage data are obtained by matching Social Security numbers of graduates with California Employment Development Department unemployment insurance records for the calendar year, two years before, and two, and five years after degree or certificate award year. Only graduates and completers employed in California during that period are counted; self-employed individuals, federal employees and those working outside of California are excluded.

In California, certificate programs requiring 18 (27) or more semester (quarter) units for completion require approval by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. Chancellor’s Office Approved certificate programs shown here have gone through this approval process. Locally Approved certificate programs shown here have not gone through this approval process.

Program areas are reported by Classification of Instructional Programs code. Six popular program areas shown here are chosen by number of awards during cohort term and data availability. Data are available for other CIP codes as part of the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Data Mart.

Wages are adjusted to constant dollars according to the California Consumer Price Index.

DATA SOURCE