

## What's the Value of Higher Ed: For the Taxpayer

Each year, Americans make a sizable investment in higher education through federal, state and local taxes. Do the results justify the investment? Absolutely! Research proves college grads are assets to our communities and our country.

*Here is what trustees—as advocates for higher education—should know:*

### What is the public investment in higher education?

Some **20 million students** attend the nation's public, independent, and for-profit colleges and universities, while federal, state, and local governments contribute **\$160 billion** to the sector each year. Taxpayer dollars fund research support, institutional appropriations, and student aid in significant and meaningful ways, but college graduates return the public investment many times over.

### College grads contribute more in taxes during their lifetimes.

In fact, they pay over **14 times more** than their counterparts with high school diplomas.

### College grads are more likely to be employed AND to employ others.

Individuals who earn bachelor's degrees are **24% more likely to be employed** than high school graduates. What's more, college graduates create jobs. Those who attend college are more than **twice as likely to own a small business** than those with a high school education or less.

### College grads give back to society.

On average, college graduates donate to charity in amounts **3.4 times higher** than high school graduates, and are **twice as likely to serve as volunteers** in their communities.

### College grads are less likely to rely on public services.

Over their lifetimes, high school graduates tap into tax-funded programming (nutrition assistance, subsidized housing, corrections, etc.) **at a rate of nearly two-to-one** over those who earn a four-year college degree. For Medicaid funding, the ratio bumps even higher.

Is college a worthwhile investment for our nation? Solid research and experiences from American higher education institutions clearly demonstrate higher education yields a powerful return on investment.