

## Why Earn an Associate Degree

- The first two years at a four-year college or university is the same course work as the first two years at a community college, *but the community college is less costly.*
- Associate-degree holders earn, on average, \$12,200 more per year more than high school diploma holders.
- Associate-degree holders enjoy a 15.4 percent rate of return on their investments of time and money to earn the associate degree.
- An associate degree can give you a head start on your career path by leading directly to the workforce.
- An associate degree can give you an advantage over non-degreed job seekers.
- Associate degree holders have lower unemployment rates than non-degree holders.
- Associate degrees allow you to explore your interests for far less money than you would pay at a four-year institution.
- If you want to earn a bachelor's degree, having an associate degree enables you to work a professional job while you complete your studies.
- Most Texas four-year colleges and universities accept the associate degree for completion of the basics (core requirements).
- The foundational knowledge you gain with an associate degree improves your ability to write, think critically and problem-solve—all of the attributes you need for advancement in any career or profession.
- Every year students leave Texas community colleges and join or rejoin the state workforce. Their added skills translate to higher income and a more robust state economy.
- Students from Texas community colleges expand the state's economic base through their higher incomes, while the businesses that employ them also become more productive through the students' added skills, contributing an estimated \$4245.5 million in taxable income to the Texas economy each year.
- Every \$1 the state invests in community colleges today yields a cumulative \$28 in benefits that accrue to all Texas residents.
- Altogether, the average annual added income due to the activities of Texas community colleges and their former students equals about \$30.3 billion. This is approximately equal to 2.6 percent of the total Texas economy.
- By 2018, 63 percent of all jobs will require post-secondary training.