

The Economic Value of National Park College



NATIONAL PARK COLLEGE (NPC) creates value in many ways. The college plays a key role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their individual potential. The college draws students to the county, generating new dollars and opportunities for the NPC Impact Area.¹ NPC provides students with the education, training, and skills they need to have fulfilling and prosperous careers. Furthermore, NPC is a place for students to meet new people, increase their self-confidence, and promote their overall health and well-being.

NPC influences both the lives of its students and the regional economy. The college supports a variety of industries in the NPC Impact Area, serves regional businesses, and benefits society as a whole in Arkansas from an expanded economy and improved quality of life. Additionally, the benefits created by NPC extend to the state and local government through increased tax revenues and public sector savings.

This study measures the economic impacts created by NPC on the business community and the benefits the college generates in return for the investments made by its key stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. The following two analyses are presented:

 **Economic impact analysis**

 **Investment analysis**

All results reflect employee, student, and financial data, provided by the college, for fiscal year (FY) 2021-22. Impacts on the NPC Impact Area economy are reported under the economic impact analysis and are measured in terms of added income. The returns on investment to students, taxpayers, and society in Arkansas are reported under the investment analysis.



NPC IMPACT AREA

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¹ For the purposes of this analysis, the NPC Impact Area is represented by Garland County.

Economic impact analysis



NPC promotes economic growth in the NPC Impact Area through its direct expenditures and the resulting expenditures of students and regional businesses. The college serves as an employer and buyer of goods and services for its day-to-day operations. The college's activities attract students from outside the NPC Impact Area, whose expenditures benefit regional vendors. In addition, NPC is a primary source of higher education to the NPC Impact Area residents and a supplier of trained workers to regional industries, enhancing overall productivity in the regional workforce.

Operations spending impact



NPC adds economic value to the NPC Impact Area as an employer of regional residents and a large-scale buyer of goods and services. In FY 2021-22, the college employed 309 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, 91% of whom lived in the NPC Impact Area. Total payroll at NPC was \$16.7 million, much of which was spent in the region for groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. In addition, the college spent \$17.1 million on day-to-day expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services.

NPC's day-to-day operations spending added \$23.7 million in income to the region during the analysis year. This figure represents the college's payroll, the multiplier effects generated by the in-region spending of the college and its employees, and a downward adjustment to account for funding that the college received from regional sources. The \$23.7 million in added income is equivalent to supporting 386 jobs in the region.

Student spending impact



Around 4% of credit students attending NPC originated from outside the region in FY 2021-22, and some of these students relocated to the NPC Impact Area to attend NPC. These students may not have come to the region if the college did not exist. In addition, some in-region students, referred to as retained students, would have left the NPC Impact Area if not for the existence of NPC. While attending the college, these relocated and retained students spent money on groceries, accommodation, transportation, and other household expenses. This spending generated \$4.2 million in added income for the regional economy in FY 2021-22, which supported 84 jobs in the NPC Impact Area.

Impacts created by NPC in FY 2021-22



Operations spending impact
\$23.7 million

+



Student spending impact
\$4.2 million

+



Alumni impact
\$83.5 million



Total economic impact
\$111.4 million

OR

Jobs supported
1,750



Alumni impact



The education and training NPC provides for regional residents has the greatest impact. Since the establishment of the college, students have studied at NPC and entered the regional workforce with greater knowledge and new skills. Today, thousands of former NPC students are employed in the NPC Impact Area. As a result of their education from NPC, the students receive higher earnings and increase the productivity of the businesses that employ them. In FY 2021-22, NPC alumni generated \$83.5 million in added income for the regional economy, which is equivalent to supporting 1,281 jobs.

Total impact

NPC added \$111.4 million in income to the NPC Impact Area economy during the analysis year, equal to the sum of the operations spending impact, the student spending impact; and the alumni impact. For context, the \$111.4 million impact was equal to approximately 2.8% of the total gross regional product (GRP) of the NPC Impact Area. This contribution that the college provided on its own is nearly as large as than the entire Real Estate & Rental & Leasing industry in the region.

NPC's total impact can also be expressed in terms of jobs supported. The \$111.4 million impact supported 1,750 regional jobs, using the jobs-to-sales ratios specific to each industry in the region. This means that one out of every 31 jobs in the NPC Impact Area is supported by the activities of NPC and its students. In addition, the \$111.4 million, or 1,750 supported jobs, stemmed from different industry sectors. For instance, among non-education industry sectors, the spending of NPC and its students and the activities of its alumni in the Health Care & Social Assistance industry sector supported 399 jobs in FY 2021-22. If the college did not exist, these impacts would not have been generated in the NPC Impact Area.

One out of every 31 jobs in the NPC Impact is supported by the activities of NPC and its students

NPC impacts by industry (jobs supported)



399

Health Care & Social Assistance



205

Retail Trade



144

Other Services (Except Public Admin)



115

Accommodation & Food Services



112

Government, Non-Education



Investment analysis



An investment analysis evaluates the costs associated with a proposed venture against its expected benefits. If the benefits outweigh the costs, then the investment is financially worthwhile. The analysis presented here evaluates NPC as an investment from the perspectives of students, taxpayers, and society in Arkansas.

Student perspective



In FY 2021-22, NPC served 2,783 credit and 3,215 non-credit students. In order to attend the college, the students paid for tuition, fees, books, and supplies. They also took out loans and will incur interest on those loans. Additionally, students forewent money they would have otherwise earned had they been working instead of attending college. The total investment made by NPC's students in FY 2021-22 amounted to a present value of \$5.1 million, equal to \$4 million in out-of-pocket expenses (including future principal and interest on student loans) and \$1.1 million in forgone time and money.

In return for their investment, NPC's students will receive a stream of higher future earnings that will continue to grow throughout their working lives. For example, the average NPC associate degree graduate from FY 2021-22 will see annual earnings that are \$7,500 higher than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Arkansas. Over a working lifetime, the benefits of the associate degree over a high school diploma will amount to an undiscounted value of \$300 thousand in higher earnings per graduate. The present value of the cumulative higher future earnings that NPC's FY 2021-22 students will receive over their working careers is \$66.6 million.

The students' benefit-cost ratio is 13.0. In other words, for every dollar students invest in NPC in the form of out-of-pocket expenses and forgone time and money, they will receive a cumulative value of \$13.00 in higher future earnings. Annually, the students' investment in NPC has an average annual internal rate of return of 84.7%, which is impressive compared to the U.S. stock market's 30-year average rate of return of 9.6%.

Students see a high rate of return for their investment in NPC



Average annual return for NPC students
84.7%



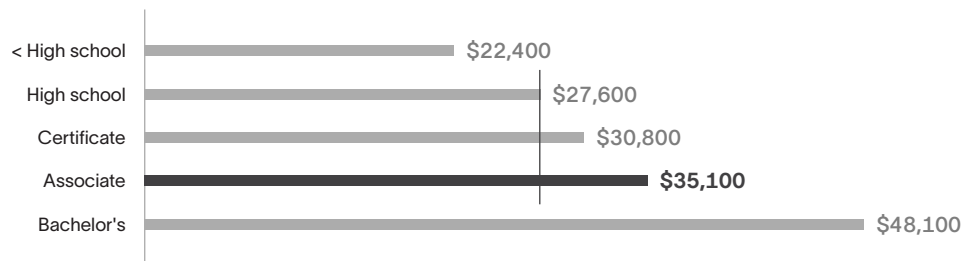
Stock market 30-year average annual return
9.6%



Interest earned on savings account (National Rate Cap)
0.4%

Source: Forbes' S&P 500, 1992-2021. FDIC.gov, 2-2022.

The average associate degree graduate from NPC will see an increase in earnings of **\$7,500** each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Arkansas.



Source: Lightcast employment data.



Taxpayer perspective



NPC generates more in tax revenue than it receives. These benefits to taxpayers consist primarily of taxes that the state and local government will collect from the added revenue created in the state. As NPC students will earn more, they will make higher tax payments throughout their working lives. Students' employers will also make higher tax payments as they increase their output and purchases of goods and services. By the end of the FY 2021-22 students' working lives, the state and local government will have collected a present value of \$21.2 million in added taxes.

Benefits to taxpayers will also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of NPC students and the corresponding reduced government services. Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes. The education that NPC students receive will generate savings in three main categories: 1) healthcare, 2) justice system, and 3) income assistance. Improved health will lower students' demand for national health care services. In addition, costs related to the justice system will decrease. NPC students will be more employable, so their reduced demand for income assistance such as welfare and unemployment benefits will benefit taxpayers. For a list of study references, contact the college for a copy of the main report. Altogether, the present value of the benefits associated with an education from NPC will generate \$2.1 million in savings to state and local taxpayers.

For every dollar of public money invested in NPC, taxpayers will receive a cumulative value of **\$1.50** over the course of the students' working lives.

Total taxpayer benefits amount to \$23.3 million, the present value sum of the added taxes and public sector savings. Taxpayer costs are \$15.4 million, equal to the amount of state and local government funding NPC received in FY 2021-22. These benefits and costs yield a benefit-cost ratio of 1.5. This means that for every dollar of public money invested in NPC in FY 2021-22, taxpayers will receive a cumulative present value of \$1.50 over the course of the students' working lives. The average annual internal rate of return for taxpayers is 2.8%, which compares favorably to other long-term investments in the public sector.

Social perspective



Society as a whole in Arkansas benefits from the presence of NPC in two major ways. Primarily, society benefits from an increased economic base in the state. This is attributed to the added income from students' increased lifetime earnings (added student income) and increased business output (added business income), which raise economic prosperity in Arkansas.

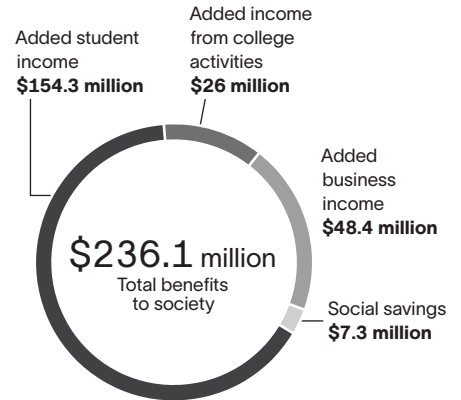
Benefits to society also consist of the savings generated by the improved lifestyles of NPC students. As discussed in the previous section, education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes that generate social savings. Note that these costs are avoided by the consumers but are distinct from the costs avoided by the taxpayers

outlined above. Healthcare savings include avoided medical costs associated with smoking, alcohol dependence, obesity, drug abuse, and depression. Justice system savings include avoided costs to the government and society due to less judicial activity. Income assistance savings include reduced welfare and unemployment claims. For a list of study references, contact the college for a copy of the main report.

Altogether, the social benefits of NPC equal a present value of \$236.1 million. These benefits include \$154.3 million in added student income, \$48.4 million in added business income, \$26.0 million in added income from college activities, as well as \$7.3 million in social savings related to health, the justice system, and income assistance in Arkansas. Arkansans invested a present value total of \$37.1 million in NPC in FY 2021-22. The cost includes all the college and student costs.

The benefit-cost ratio for society is 6.4, equal to the \$236.1 million in benefits divided by the \$37.1 million in costs. In other words, for every dollar invested in NPC, Arkansans will receive a cumulative value of \$6.40 in benefits. The benefits of this investment will occur for as long as NPC's FY 2021-22 students remain employed in the state workforce.

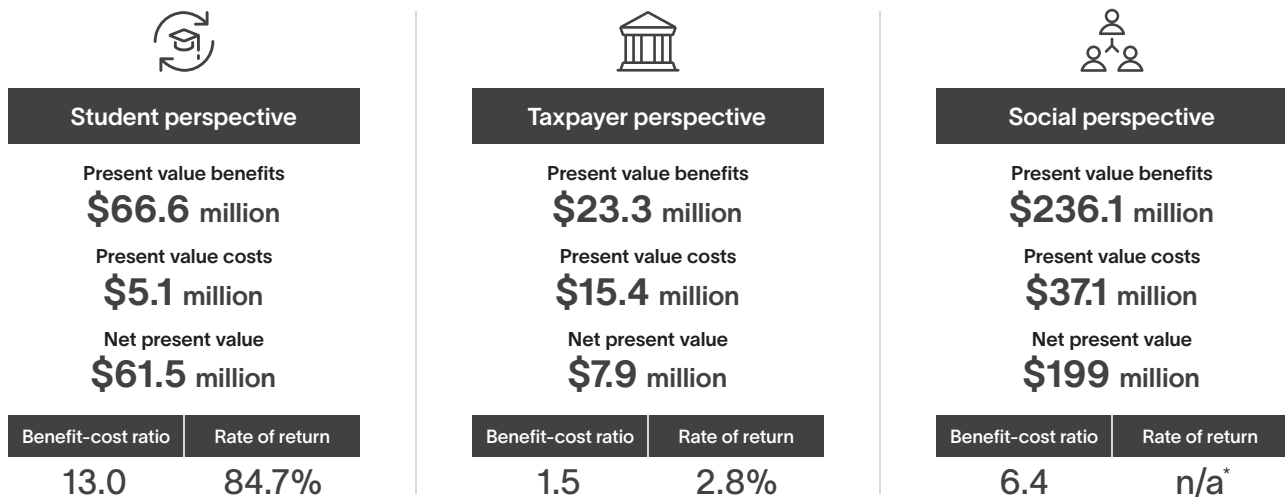
Social benefits in Arkansas from NPC



Source: Lightcast impact model.

Summary of investment analysis results

The results of the analysis demonstrate that NPC is a strong investment for all three major stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. As shown, students receive a great return for their investments in an education from NPC. At the same time, taxpayers' investment in NPC returns more to government budgets than it costs and creates a wide range of social benefits throughout Arkansas.



* The rate of return is not reported for the social perspective because the beneficiaries of the investment are not necessarily the same as the original investors.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that NPC creates value from multiple perspectives. The college benefits regional businesses by increasing consumer spending in the region and supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers to the workforce. NPC enriches the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential. The college benefits state and local taxpayers through increased tax receipts and a reduced demand for government-supported social services. Finally, NPC benefits society as a whole in Arkansas by creating a more prosperous economy and generating a variety of savings through the improved lifestyles of students.



About the study

Data and assumptions used in the study are based on several sources, including the FY 2021-22 academic and financial reports from NPC, industry and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, outputs of Lightcast's Multi-Regional Social Accounting Matrix model, and a variety of studies and surveys relating education to social behavior. The study applies a conservative methodology and follows standard practice using only the most recognized indicators of economic impact and investment effectiveness. For a full description of the data and approach used in the study, please contact the college for a copy of the main report.

The results of this study demonstrate that NPC creates value from **multiple perspectives.**



Lightcast provides colleges and universities with labor market data that help create better outcomes for students, businesses, and communities. Our data, which cover more than 99% of the U.S. workforce, are compiled from a wide variety of government sources, job postings, and online profiles and résumés. Hundreds of institutions use Lightcast to align programs with regional needs, drive enrollment, connect students with in-demand careers, track their alumni's employment outcomes, and demonstrate their institution's economic impact on their region. Visit lightcast.io/solutions/education to learn more or connect with us.