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Top 10 Reasons for Completing Community College

1. You'll earn more! Students who complete their associate degree or certificate can expect to earn as much as \$8,000 more per year and about \$400,000 more in a lifetime than a high school graduate. ¹
2. You'll be prepared! People change jobs up to 10 times in their working lives – and when you are job-hunting, a college credential will always give you an edge. ²
3. Credential holders also are more likely to retain jobs. Unemployment for community college graduates is typically 30 percent lower than for high school grads. ³
4. You'll encounter fewer barriers to transfer! Many state college systems have articulation agreements that guarantee transfer of community college credits when associate degree students enter state universities. You'll save time and money by not having to repeat courses or take courses you did not know you needed. ⁴
5. You'll have the personal satisfaction of reaching your educational goal and having something tangible to show for it – something valued by employers, scholarship officials and transfer recruiters.
6. You'll help reverse a national trend in the declining number of college graduates, and you'll also open doors for your children. Children of college graduates are more likely to graduate themselves. ⁵
7. You and your family's health will improve. Research links greater educational attainment to longer life, healthful eating, exercising and avoiding risk factors. Better-educated people are quicker to change behaviors in response to new evidence. Better-educated people have higher incomes, making them more likely to have health insurance and live in safer neighborhoods with better access to recreational facilities and grocery stores. ⁶
8. You will be more likely to promote environmental sustainability. ⁵
9. You'll be more likely to volunteer, vote, contribute to charity, serve on boards and run for office. ⁵
10. You'll be an educated, prepared and higher-paid employee, providing support for federal, state and local governments and helping the national workforce be competitive and productive in the global economy. ⁵

Fiction: You can get a good job without finishing college.

Fact: 60 percent of jobs by 2020 will require a college credential.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 data

² Rosenberg McKay, D. "How Often Do People Change Careers?" Guide to Career Planning since 1997 (2006)

³ Internationally, College Graduates Fared Better During Recession, Chronicle of Higher Education, September 2010

⁴ The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, American Association of Community Colleges, The National Articulation and Transfer Network

⁵ With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them, A Public Agenda Report for The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

⁶ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Commission to Build a Healthier America