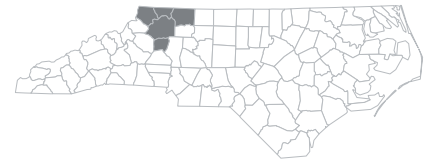


# THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S Welding Technology Program



*The Welding Technology program<sup>1</sup> was established in 1997. In FY 2019-20, WCC enrolled 151 students in the program. Of these students, 45 graduated with a certificate in FY 2019-20.*



THE WCC SERVICE REGION, NC

## CAREER OUTLOOK

The Welding Technology program can lead students into a number of occupations, which may include first-line supervisors of construction trades & extraction workers; plumbers, pipefitters, & steamfitters; and reinforcing iron & rebar workers. Many of the Welding Technology program students will enter the WCC Service Region<sup>2</sup> workforce.

Using the regional number of annual job openings for these occupations (78) and subtracting the FY 2019-20 WCC completers that may fill these openings (45), we arrive at a gap of 33 job openings.<sup>3</sup> There are 45 unique job postings at the associate degree or below for these occupations in the WCC Service Region. The top three posting companies are Tyson Foods, Inc.; Army National Guard; and McDonald's Corporation.

## ALUMNI IMPACT

Former students of WCC's Welding Technology program added \$270 thousand in income to the WCC Service Region economy in FY 2019-20. This figure represents the increased wages collected by former students active today in the regional workforce as a direct result of their education, the increased output of businesses that employ these students, and the multiplier effects that occur.

### PROGRAM TO OCCUPATION MAPPING METRICS IN THE WCC SERVICE REGION

Number of occupations	8
Jobs (2020)	2,254
Projected avg. job growth (2020-2029)	+0.5%
Annual openings (2020)	78
Median annual wage (2020)*	\$42,024

\* The median annual wage reflects all award levels.

### ALUMNI LIFETIME EARNINGS INCREASE AND IMPACT

Lifetime earnings  
increase per completer  
**\$251.5 thousand**

Total alumni impact  
in FY 2019-20  
**\$270.0 thousand**

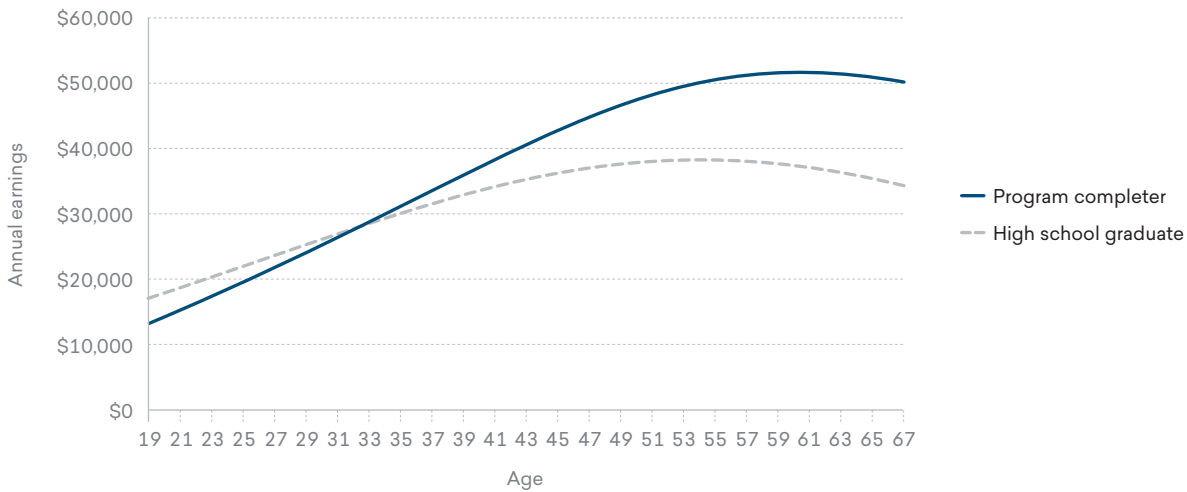


- 1 The Welding Technology program is defined by the following Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code: Welding Technology/Welder (48.0508).
- 2 For the purposes of this analysis, the WCC Service Region is defined as Wilkes, Ashe, Alleghany, Alexander, Surry Counties.
- 3 For the purposes of this analysis, only WCC completers were considered when comparing to annual openings.

## STUDENT RETURN ON INVESTMENT

To earn a certificate in the program, students experience costs in the form of tuition and fees, books and supplies, and the opportunity cost of attending school instead of working. In return for this investment, students can earn higher wages. For every dollar students invest in their education in the program, they will receive \$6.60 back over the course of their working lives. This investment can also be seen in terms of a rate of return of 18.2%. This is an impressive return, especially when compared to the U.S. stock market 30-year average return of 10.6%.

LIFETIME EARNINGS OF A PROGRAM COMPLETER  
COMPARED TO A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE



## TAXPAYER BENEFITS

Taxpayers will receive an estimated present value of \$911.8 thousand in added tax revenue stemming from the students' higher lifetime earnings and the increased output of businesses. Savings to the public sector add another estimated \$67.4 thousand in benefits due to a reduced demand for government-funded social services in North Carolina. Throughout the students' working lives, North Carolina taxpayers will receive a total of \$979.1 thousand in benefits.

Throughout the students' working lives, **North Carolina taxpayers** gain in added tax revenue and public sector savings  
**\$979.1 thousand**

