University of Colorado system generates $12.5 billion in economic impact across Colorado[1]

The University of Colorado system generated $12.5 billion in economic impact across Colorado in fiscal year 2025–26, highlighting CU's role in the state's economy through its contributions in education, research, innovation and health care. This total is up from $12.2 billion in fiscal year 2024-25.

CU's campus-by-campus economic impact was led by CU Anschutz at $5.6 billion, followed by CU Boulder at $5.3 billion, CU Denver at $744.2 million and UCCS at $571 million. CU System Administration contributed $248 million.

Combined with CU Anschutz's affiliated hospitals, UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital and Children's Hospital Colorado, CU's total statewide economic impact rises to $20.3 billion. This total is up from $20 billion in 2024-25.

The Business Research Division at CU Boulder's Leeds School of Business conducted the study.

"CU continues to build on its value for all Coloradans by not only providing pathways for student success, but also through its contributions to our state's economy and workforce," said CU President Todd Saliman. "For 150 years, CU has been a major contributor to the well-being of our state, and this newest impact study continues to reinforce – even in these challenging economic times – that our university is foundational to Colorado's well-being for the next 150 years."

The study examined how university spending contributes to Colorado's economy through employee earnings, operations, construction, research, and spending by students and visitors. The findings do not include the broader economic contributions of CU alums working in Colorado or the long-term economic impact of technologies developed at the university.

CU and its affiliated hospitals supported nearly 103,000 jobs statewide, including 60,604 associated with the university and 42,207 with the hospitals. This economic activity generated an estimated $9.6 billion in labor income of the $20.3 billion total. CU also remained one of Colorado's five largest employers in 2026, underscoring its significant role in the state's workforce and economy.

"Our economic impact is something to take pride in, but it's what's behind the numbers that matters most," said CU Anschutz Chancellor Don Elliman. "It's the difference we make for people and families across Colorado and beyond. Every day at CU Anschutz, our faculty, staff and students, together with our hospital partners, work to change lives. Whether it's driving discoveries in cancer and Alzheimer's disease, training future health leaders or caring for people when they need us most, our impact is about so much more than dollars. That's what makes this place so special."

Research expenditure activity alone generated an estimated $5.4 billion in economic impact. CU also received $1.8 billion in sponsored program awards and CU Foundation gifts during FY 2025–26, with CU Anschutz and CU Boulder accounting for 98% of the total.

"CU Boulder's impact on the region's economy is a tremendous source of pride, and our reach extends far beyond Boulder," said CU Boulder Chancellor Justin Schwartz. "Recently ranked 40th in the world for startups by PitchBook, CU Boulder helps position Colorado as a destination for innovation, entrepreneurship and opportunity by transforming groundbreaking research and entrepreneurial talent into real-world impact. Our record of research and discovery also demonstrates how bold ideas can drive lasting change around the globe, leveraging our talent and resources to address society's most pressing challenges."

CU contributes to Colorado's economy by purchasing from local businesses, attracting research funding, educating the workforce and helping turn discoveries into new technologies and companies.

"As the Denver metro area's anchor higher ed partner, CU Denver is committed to driving economic mobility, fueling innovation, and expanding opportunity across our region," said CU Denver Chancellor Kenneth T. Christensen. "We embrace our responsibility to strengthen the workforce, create pathways to success, and advance the economic and social prosperity of the communities we serve."

Regionally, CU's university-only impact was greatest in the Denver metropolitan statistical area at $7.2 billion, followed by the Boulder area at $4.4 billion, the Colorado Springs area at $600 million and other Colorado metropolitan areas at $300 million.

"As Southern Colorado's premier research university, UCCS works with industry, government, non-profit and military partners to develop workforce talent and accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship," said UCCS Chancellor Jennifer Sobanet. "We're proud to contribute directly to the resilience and prosperity of the region we call home."

Innovation and entrepreneurship remain important parts of CU's statewide reach. In FY 2025–26, Venture Partners at CU Boulder reported 29 startups and 100 license and option agreements, while CU Anschutz Innovations reported more than 45 licensing deals.

CU enrolled 67,442 students in fall 2026 and awarded 19,660 degrees during FY 2025–26. With more than 327,000 alumni living in Colorado, the university continues to strengthen the state's workforce through graduates working in business, education, health care, technology and other fields.

Through education, research, health care and innovation, CU continues to strengthen Colorado's economy, create opportunities for its residents and make a lasting impact on communities across the state.

To view the full report, click here: 2025-2026 Economic Impact Report[2]

Exhibition Celebrates the Launch of CU Denver's Permanent Art Collection[3]

CAR T-Cell Therapy Shows Lasting Improvements in Stiff Person Syndrome, Study at CU Anschutz Finds[4]

How CU Denver's Bachelor's Degree in Cybersecurity Prepares Students for an Ever-Evolving Career Path[5]

128th Distinguished Research Lectureship: Michael McGehee[6]

Finding opportunity, purpose and home at UCCS[7]

The Phoenix Center at Auraria Hosted Judy and Dennis Shepard in Recognition of Hate Crimes Awareness Month[8]

October Staff Employee of the Month[9]

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