PLAYBOOK
HOW TO BUILD A PROMISE

A resource for city and county elected officials to build College Promise programs for their communities.
# Table of Contents

**Preface**
- Welcome from Dr. Jill Biden and Gov. Jim Geringer 2
- Greetings from West Sacramento Mayor Chris Cabaldon 3

**Introduction**
- What is a College Promise program? 5
- Local Growth for Promise 5
- Playbook Objectives 5

**Laying the Foundation**
- Assess Community Needs 6
- Plan Benchmarks to Measure Success 7
- Identifying a Champion for the Cause 8
- Build Broad Support 8
- Establish a Leadership Team 9

**Program Design**
- Program Scope 10
- Determining How to Distribute Funds 12
- Partnerships 13
- Program Support Features 13

**Fundraising**
- Making the Case for Funding 15
- Public Sources of Funding 16
- Private Sources of Funding 17
- Best Practices in Fundraising 19

**Administering and Sustaining the Promise**
- Recruiting Students 20
- Launching and Implementing Promise 21
- Maintaining Public presence 22
- Tracking Results and Evaluating Progress 22

**Conclusion** 23

**Appendix** 24

Visit collegepromise.org or follow us on Twitter @College_Promise to learn more about the movement.
Welcome from Dr. Biden and Gov. Geringer

As our economy rapidly changes in the 21st century, one fact is clear: a high school education is no longer enough to secure a good job and earn a livelihood. To address this challenge, elected officials from coast to coast have built strategic partnerships within their communities to successfully launch College Promise programs, which cover a range of tuition, fees, and student support services for any hardworking student.

City and county leaders like you are investing in those students through College Promise programs because they understand that education is a path to a happier, healthier future for individuals, families, and local economies. Our evolving workforce offers great opportunities for better jobs. If cities and counties hope to thrive in this environment, they must produce more graduates with college degrees, technical certificates, or apprenticeships.

As Chair and Vice Chair of the College Promise National Advisory Board, we are delighted to have witnessed the extraordinary expansion of Promise programs over the last two and a half years, with initiatives quadrupling to more than 200 programs established or underway in 44 states. Local leaders have adopted or expanded free college programs to serve larger metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, CA, Detroit, MI, Milwaukee, WI, and Dallas, TX, as well as smaller cities, towns, and counties like Akron, OH, Palatine, IL, Brunswick County, NC, and West Sacramento, CA. Each College Promise program presents a unique, collaborative model – designed specifically for the individual needs of local students – that can offer lessons to other regions.

To assist with that process, the College Promise Campaign has developed the City and County Playbook (Playbook). In partnership with elected champions, like Mayor Cabaldon who has shown tremendous leadership in encouraging cities and counties to bring Promise programs to their communities. With input from the Campaign’s Research Network, the Playbook is intended as a resource of shared experiences and best practices of Promise programs.

To be sure, there is no single way to build a College Promise program; each municipality or county must determine what will work best for its local economy. There are, however, several factors and design features worthy of careful consideration, such as strategies for coalition building, program scope, financing, marketing, data collection and evaluation, and providing support services to better assist students to complete their course of study.

We hope you find this Playbook to be a useful tool as you build a Promise in your city or county.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jill Biden
Honorary Chair
College Promise National Advisory Board

Gov. Jim Geringer
Honorary Vice Chair
College Promise National Advisory Board
Greetings from
West Sacramento
Mayor Chris Cabaldon

When I first announced in May of 2016, during my State of the City address, that West Sacramento (population 50,000) would make the first year of community college fee-free for graduating seniors, I had a vision, but no committed city funding or philanthropic partners. What we lacked in resources, we made up for in public will and community pride. Just as important however, we had the support and expertise of a network of mayors and elected officials across the country who have joined the movement to increase college completion rates and reduce the barriers to postsecondary education through implementing successful College Promise programs. By November 2016, the residents of my city had, by a 65% margin, voted in favor of funding a College Promise program in West Sacramento and we had received seed funds from several philanthropic donors while fostering outcome-oriented partnerships spanning the nonprofit and business community.

As elected officials we understand the impact higher education has on our neighborhoods and communities. Some of us were the first person in our family to receive a higher education, changing the economic trajectory of multiple generations, while others have seen the impact of college educated residents returning to our cities to start new businesses, or bringing back new skills and talent to an existing industry, increasing our community’s economic competitiveness. Irrespective of your personal experience, having a postsecondary degree is essential to achieving a higher quality of life, and long-term career security. The need for some form postsecondary credential, whether it be an apprenticeship, certificate, or college degree will only increase in the future, and by 2020 it’s projected that 65% of all jobs in the United States will require some form of postsecondary education. Never before has there been a time in our history when the need for postsecondary education was so high, while the barriers to affordability and accessibility remained so great.

We as elected officials have the best opportunity to drastically increase postsecondary completion rates while significantly increasing our cities workforce development and economic competitiveness.

Local governments are best suited to implement this work, and we as local elected officials are the ones to lead it. We are the face of our city and the person who communities turn to when in need or crisis. We have the trust of our residents and the ear of our business community. Philanthropic organizations know that when we speak, news outlets and community organizations listen because we deliver. Around the country, our colleagues are piloting programs designed to drastically increase college completion rates and quickly upskill their workforces for the high-growth, high-wage, high-demand jobs of today and the future.

This Playbook will act as a blueprint for you to replicate the College Promise programs in other cities, including my own, have created in their communities. Its chapters cover everything from conducting community need assessments to long term financing, outreach and marketing to results tracking and evaluation. Whether you are interested in learning best practices, replicating successful models, or just beginning to explore what a College Promise program could do for your city, you will find this Playbook to be a useful resource.

In collaboration,

Mayor Chris Cabaldon
West Sacramento, California
College Promise National Advisory Board
West Sacramento Mayor’s Office
Mayor Chris Cabaldon, West Sacramento, CA
Ian Winbrock, Deputy to the Mayor

College Promise Campaign Staff
Martha J. Kanter, Executive Director
Rita Aguilar, Chief of Staff
Anjana Venkatesan, Senior Advisor, Policy & Research
Matt Caffrey, Director, Engagement & Advocacy
Andra H. Armstrong, Senior Communications Strategist
Katie Havens, Director, Development & Operations
Karina Lopez, College Promise Fellow
Emily Lin, College Promise Fellow
Kirsten Flood, Civic Advisors Fellow

Special thanks to former College Promise Campaign staff who originated this Playbook
Angela Cammack, Deputy Director
James Schuelke, Sr. Director, Engagement
Brenna Parker, Digital Coordinator
Isabel Han, Fellow
Charles Lee, Fellow
Maya White, Fellow
Ryan Liu, Fellow

Biden Foundation Staff
Lauren Ford, Biden Foundation Fellow
Introduction

What is a College Promise Program?
A high school diploma is no longer enough to guarantee access to a good job and a decent quality life. It is becoming increasingly clear that higher education is essential to achieving these goals, and yet the cost of college has never been greater. College Promise programs are a policy vehicle to help combat the barrier to education that rising costs present. They do this by covering at a minimum the cost of tuition and fees, making a college degree more affordable and accessible for hardworking students. A Promise can be scaled for a single institution, a local community, or even an entire state. Each program can tailor its particular features and funding strategies to the needs and available resources of its chosen area.

Local Growth for Promise
Local elected officials are uniquely positioned to lead the College Promise movement as, unlike leaders from other sectors, elected officials have intimate knowledge about the strengths and challenges their communities face. They work on behalf of all their community’s sectors, identifying solutions to local problems, and allocating resources to optimize results. Elected officials can leverage their public platforms and use their leadership role, bully pulpit, city resources, and convening authority to drive a College Promise agenda and build broad support around a shared mission of a better educated community and workforce.

While College Promise programs can take root anywhere, they thrive with the commitment of local leaders and community support. Mayors and other local elected officials are already generating momentum for College Promise programs. From Los Angeles to Boston, Lansing to Houston, hundreds of elected officials are making a difference to ensure opportunities for residents of their communities to access college and attain a certificate or degree.

Playbook Objectives
This Playbook is a resource for local elected officials and their teams to guide them through every step of building or expanding College Promise programs in their communities. There are four sections that can be followed in order or referred to as needed. The first section covers laying the groundwork for a Promise by building support within your community. The second section, which makes up the bulk of the Playbook, discusses program design and reviews various features that can help make a program successful. The third section goes over financial sustainability and includes fundraising best practices. The fourth and final section discusses the implementation and administration of a Promise program. Prominent examples of successful Promise programs from across the country will be featured throughout the Playbook to demonstrate the utility of key program design elements.

Assessing Community Needs

Identifying the community’s goals and motivations for building a College Promise program is a critical first step. Doing so will help influence the program’s scope, design, and administrative structure, while also helping elected officials identify and engage the coalition of support needed to initiate and sustain a successful program.

At the local level, common motivations for investing in College Promise programs center around promoting the economic and social prosperity of residents, their families, and the community as a whole. Local leaders understand that economic development can be spurred if employers are provided with a better educated workforce. They know that businesses would be more likely to invest in the community if workers are prepared for the jobs that need to be filled. Several studies also show that Promise programs have successfully attracted families who then set down roots and stay local. Other motivations for implementing a Promise program include fostering a college-going culture, supporting traditionally underserved students, helping alleviate intergenerational poverty, promoting community engagement and pride, and reducing crime rates.

Boston, Massachusetts—Boston’s Tuition-Free Community College Plan, which provides free community college and enhanced counseling for high school students, is run out of the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development. Mayor Walsh remarked that “The single most effective way to break down the social and financial barriers facing many Boston families is to make postsecondary education free and accessible. I am so proud to launch this program and give our talented [high school] graduates another resource for success.” Mayor Marty Walsh and his team implemented the plan after noting that approximately 77 percent of jobs in Boston will require postsecondary education and training by 2020. To meet this demand, Walsh says his team “found an opportunity to leverage [Boston’s] citywide growth to help fund a tuition-free community college program for our students.”

Kalamazoo, Michigan—Over a decade ago when leaders in Kalamazoo needed an incentive to retain and grow its population, so they turned to free college. The Kalamazoo Promise, launched in 2005, is the nation’s oldest College Promise program. This place-based scholarship provides varying levels of funds to cover tuition depending on how long high school graduates have resided in the community. Students can use those dollars to attend a public college, public university, or a private postsecondary institution approved for participation. In 2006, Mayor Hannah McKinney emphasized the transformative impact on the city’s reputation as a primary goal of the program, saying “We will be the education city. We will be a place where every kid goes to college.” The Kalamazoo Promise has done just that by attracting an influx of families looking to take advantage of the scholarship. In fact, a 2015 study found a significant reduction of out-migration rates in Kalamazoo, suggesting that the Promise program helped increase the local population by 1.7 percent, a population surge that even generated a housing boom.

Plan Benchmarks to Measure Success

Well-designed and well-funded College Promise programs have the potential to yield a set of broad, positive results that demonstrate a program’s success. To build support and ultimately validate the program’s effectiveness at addressing previously identified community needs, it is important to establish clear metrics that will be used to measure success. These metrics might include rates of:

- **High school graduation**: Students who have finished their secondary education or have a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).
- **Enrollment, persistence, and completion of a college degree**: Attracting new and returning students who can now afford a community college education; retaining students and supporting their success with wrap-around services (e.g., counseling, mentorship, etc.); ensuring students persist in completing their degrees or certificates.
- **Population growth and retention**: An increase in the number of people who reside in a state, county, or city where a program operates.
- **Employment**: An increase in local, high-demand careers that pay living wages.
- **Income**: Earnings over time for college educated and trained employees.
- **Reliance on public assistance**: Government benefits provided to those in need, usually in the form of cash or vouchers.
- **Poverty rates**: The ratio of people who fall below the poverty line compared to the total population.

No two Promise programs are alike. Prospective programs must decide early on what success looks like for their Promise. Once metrics are chosen, program designers should put into place effective means of gathering and analyzing relevant data to ensure the Promise achieves desired outcomes.

**Tennessee** - The Tennessee Promise provides an important model for measuring success. The initiative is championed by Gov. Bill Haslam (R). When he was the mayor of Knoxville, a local philanthropist made an initial investment to fund a county-wide free community college program. Inspired by the success of this initiative while serving as mayor, Gov. Haslam launched the Tennessee Promise. Now in its third year of full implementation, the Tennessee Promise is sharing some encouraging results. “Since the program started, more than 33,000 students have enrolled in college as a result of Tennessee Promise,” said Gov. Bill Haslam. “And of the students who began in Fall 2015, 63 percent are still enrolled... We've led the nation in FAFSA filings the past two years, and at a time when the rest of the nation is wondering what to do about student loans, Tennessee has seen a 17 percent decrease in the number of students taking out loans.” The graduation rate of the first Tennessee Promise community college cohort after 5 semesters showed a substantial increase from 13.8 percent to 21.5 percent and a 60 percent completion increase for students earning a degree or technical certificate.3 By increasing enrollment, retention, and completion rates, the Tennessee Promise underscores the progress that can be made through College Promise programs. And it demonstrates how local Promise efforts can expand to benefit regions and states.


Gov. Bill Haslam congratulated some of the first Tennesseans to graduate from the state’s community college tuition-free on May 6, 2017.
Identify a Champion for the Cause

While a broad coalition of support is key for building a successful College Promise program, the process often begins with one central champion who is willing to be both highly visible and vocal about the need for a Promise. A community’s champion can be an individual leader, a department, or an organization. Across different communities, a common feature of champions is that they are willing to step forward and drive the College Promise vision by engaging local supporters from diverse sectors and convening community leaders.

Three of the most important partners for a champion to approach include:

1. College campus or district partners whose institutions will ultimately implement the Promise.
2. Key political influencers in the community who can drive the initial vision to realization.
3. Strong financial leaders to help build credibility and sustainability for the Promise.

San Jose, California- Mayor Sam Liccardo (D) and community college leaders are developing the San Jose-Silicon Valley Promise as a collaborative, regional initiative. By working closely with the community college district’s chancellors, building on an institutional Promise already underway, and leveraging state innovation grant funds, the mayor’s team and his partners are bringing their vision of affordable college to the region. Mayor Liccardo shared the urgent need for this program at its launch, “How can we not invest in this? The cost of doing nothing is far too great.”

West Sacramento, California- Mayor Chris Cabaldon (D) championed College Promise via the city’s cradle to college and career initiative, “West Sacramento Home Run.” This comprehensive program emphasizes education and jobs by combining universal preschool, college savings accounts, paid internships, and free community college, among other forward-looking components. The program covers the first year of community college tuition and fees for eligible students. Recent high school graduates must complete an educational plan, enroll full-time, and apply for federal aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The program is a partnership between the City of West Sacramento, Washington Unified School District, and Sacramento City College and was approved by voters through a 2016 referendum.

Build Broad Support

College Promise champions will need to cast a wide net to identify and develop support for the program with as many diverse stakeholders as possible. Promise programs are more likely to have a long lasting impact if residents and community leaders feel a sense of ownership and pride in their College Promise. For this reason, using a cross-sector approach that brings leaders together from a variety of interests and perspectives is ideal. Elected officials should consider seeking out these seven specific sectors to build support for their Promise programs.

1. Education leaders (e.g., K-12 and higher education leaders -- presidents, superintendents, trustees, faculty, staff, and institutional foundation directors)
2. Elected officials (e.g., mayors, city council members, county executives, school board members, etc.)
3. Business leaders (e.g., major employers and small business leaders, chambers of commerce, etc.)
4. Foundation leaders (e.g., community foundations, prominent local philanthropists, state grantmaking institutions, etc.)
5. Students (e.g., current college and K-12 students, community college alumni, dual enrollment students)
6. Labor representatives (e.g., local union chapters looking to train new workers and retrain their members)
7. Nonprofit leaders (e.g., community service providers from education, social welfare, economic empowerment, and religious organizations, such as the United Way, YWCA, etc.)

In developing a coalition of supporters, consider the variety of leaders and diverse representatives in the community who have the resources or networks to give the Promise initiative both visibility and credibility. Each community has its own unique set of leaders and sectors, which is why every coalition should represent the sectors that are most critical for the health and prosperity of the specific
region of interest for the prospective Promise program. Depending on the locality, it may be beneficial to engage faith-based or local nonprofit leaders from organizations such as the Elks Lodges, Rotary, Kiwanis, or Quota Clubs.

After stakeholders and sector leaders have been identified, there are a variety of actions that can be taken to build support for a Promise program. Reach out and request initial meetings or calls. Share student stories and outcomes from other College Promise programs (visit CollegePromise.org for a database of these programs). Invite leaders from other Promise programs to join the discussion, highlighting their successes and challenges for prospective partners. It is often worth taking the time to request individual and small group meetings to brief potential leaders and investors about the purpose, goals, and expected outcomes of the Promise. It is important to have broad support including public and private partners whose investments, large or small, make a lasting impact on the success of the Promise and the students it seeks to serve.

**Long Beach, California** - The Long Beach College Promise benefits from a deep and long-standing partnership between Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC), California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), and the City of Long Beach. “The single most important thing that we can do to strengthen our local and regional and national economy is to invest in education,” said Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, “which is why education [is] my top priority as mayor and why we decided to partner with our great institutions” to implement this program. The Long Beach College Promise provides a free year of tuition at LBCC, guaranteed admission to CSULB, early student outreach and support, and many other services supporting student success. Mayor Garcia has also pledged to expand the program by including universal preschool and doubling the internships available to the program’s high school students.

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin** - In Milwaukee, County Executive Chris Abele made a personal gift of $750,000 to the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) Promise, which serves some of the state’s poorest neighborhoods. “MATC is a first-class academic institution educating the students that will help close the skills gap in Wisconsin,” said Mr. Abele. “I am proud to invest in the expansion of this program to give more people access to a quality education.” In November 2016, Senator Tammy Baldwin and Mayor Tom Barrett announced a $6 million America’s Promise award from the Department of Labor for Employ Milwaukee. “We are thrilled to be receiving the America’s Promise award. It will ensure job seekers are connected to educational opportunities and career pathways,” Mayor Barrett said. “It is an example of strong regional collaboration to develop a highly skilled workforce across the Midwest and bring much-needed resources to Milwaukee.”

**Establish a Leadership Team**

Once broad support from key local stakeholders is secured, it is important to build out a team of people who can drive the technical development of the Promise program. This team will function as an inner circle of support to match the outer circle of stakeholder support who give the program the political support needed for success. This smaller internal circle will drive the research, fact-finding, evaluation, and ultimate determination of program design features such as eligibility criteria or costs covered by the grant. It is critical that the team is constituted of people committed to the cause of building the Promise program and with the right expertise to get the work done. These folks need not be the public face of the initiative, although in some cases they may be effective in that role. Rather, they work behind the scenes to think outside the box, crunch the numbers, and make informed decisions. Ultimately, they may evaluate a number of possible structures or features for a Promise program and present the options, with a description of the various tradeoffs, to the ultimate decision maker for the program - likely a mayor or county executive.

Some of the functions that may be helpful to include within this inner circle:

- Research/policy liaison - someone or multiple people with data crunching skills, budgetary know-how, and familiarity with K-12 and higher education data to measure access, affordability, and success. This person should know where to look for the data they need to estimate costs, the expected impact of specific features on the college-going rate, persistence rate, and completion...
rate, and potential consequences for specific populations.

- **Education liaison** - a member of the team with strong connections to local school board(s), community colleges, and 4-year institutions who understands their interests, capacities, and limitations.
- **Business liaison** - a member of the team who understands the needs of the business community and who has contact with large employers.
- **Community liaison** - a member of the team who has relationships with and deep understanding of the key organizations who will impact the success of the Promise (e.g., local community foundation, PTA, labor leader, and providers of related public services such as the YMCA, United Way, Rotary, workforce investment board, etc.).
- **Values grounded voice** - someone on the team - if not every member of the team - should be grounded in the values and priorities of the elected official to ensure that the policy the team develops ultimately reflects those values. For example, one member of the team might evaluate proposed features of the program through an equity or racial justice lens.

**Program Design**

As every city or region is unique, there is no one-size-fits-all model of a College Promise program, so every Promise must be developed with the program design elements that best address identified community needs. Below are some of the fundamental design characteristics that can help tailor a Promise program for a specific community.

**Program Scope**

The scope of a Promise program, as determined by the number of students covered and the institutions where Promise funds can be used, depends on the program's mission, partners, available funding, and other factors. Some programs cover a single institution, such as a community college, while others cover a group of institutions, such as all public colleges and universities in a region. The majority of programs cover only public institutions, however, some programs include a list of private institutions as well. Below are the types of educational institutions typically included in College Promise programs along with a few of the benefits of choosing each:

- **Two-year public or private nonprofit institutions:** Community colleges that offer certificates or Associate degrees, as well as career and technical schools offering certificates. Lower per student cost are ideal for reaching underserved populations or to quickly bolster workforce readiness/industry specific growth.

- **Four-year public or private nonprofit institutions:** Colleges and universities that offer a Bachelor’s degree. Some may also offer an Associate degree. Relieves a greater proportion of higher education debt, more directly improves degree/educational attainment, and can inspire students to prepare for college and parents to invest in the community.

- **Both two and four-year:** Most comprehensive access to education. Encourages a college-going culture for all levels of students.

Promise programs use specific eligibility and persistence criteria to determine the types of students they will serve and to set benchmarks for continued participation in the Promise program. When planning eligibility, consider the inclusion of waivers or appeals for students that do not qualify initially or those who end up losing eligibility after enrollment in the program. Common criteria include:

- **Age:** The majority of programs serve recent high school graduates, many of which include a specific period of eligibility after high school graduation. Some programs serve only older adults (e.g., 25 years or older), while other serve people of any age.

- **Residency:** Promise programs determine a service-area which their program covers, often a specific school district, city, county, or state. May also include a minimum length of residency.
**Financial Need:** Programs typically require students to fill out the FAFSA, or a state-based equivalent, annually. Some programs cover only students who qualify for financial aid or whose income or estimated family contribution falls within a set threshold.

**Merit:** Many programs include merit-based criteria, such as a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) or qualifying scores on a standardized exam (i.e., SAT or ACT).

**High School Type:** Some programs limit eligibility based on the category of high school from which a student graduates (i.e., public, charter, private, homeschool, GED).

**Citizenship:** Some programs take students’ citizenship status into account (i.e., U.S. citizen, legal permanent resident, DACA/undocumented, etc).

**Minimum Course Load:** Many College Promise programs require that students maintain a minimum course or credit load (i.e., full or half-time enrollment).

**Community Service:** Several programs require that students complete a specific number of community service hours per semester or academic year.

**Selected Support Services:** Promise programs can require that students receive or participate in associated academic or student support services (i.e., counseling, mentoring, advising, tutoring, etc.) to encourage degree completion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dabney Promise</th>
<th>New Haven Promise</th>
<th>Palomar Promise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>No age restriction</td>
<td>Recent high school grads</td>
<td>Recent high school grads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merit</strong></td>
<td>2.25 GPA</td>
<td>3.0 GPA</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90% attendance record</td>
<td>Clean disciplinary record</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial need</strong></td>
<td>Must complete FAFSA</td>
<td>Must complete FAFSA or equivalent</td>
<td>Must complete FAFSA or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High school type</strong></td>
<td>All types</td>
<td>New Haven Public Schools or an approved charter school</td>
<td>Eligible high school within the Palomar College district service area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td>U.S. citizens and permanent residents</td>
<td>U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and undocumented students</td>
<td>U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and undocumented students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum course load</strong></td>
<td>9 credit hours per semester</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>12 units per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community service</strong></td>
<td>4 hours per semester</td>
<td>40 hours in high school</td>
<td>None required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selected Support Services</strong></td>
<td>None required</td>
<td>None required</td>
<td>First Year Experience program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When deciding scope, keep in mind desired outcomes and target populations. Including more institutions and few eligibility criteria will make a program more inclusive and broadly impactful but also more costly, harder to directly manage, and more difficult to measure success. A more targeted program with a few key partner institutions and limiting eligibility criteria can be more intensely managed for success. However, it may touch relatively few individuals and yield fewer systemic benefits. With these limitations, many programs start small in scope with a pilot program and expand as success is proven.
The goal of any College Promise program is to make higher education more affordable and accessible for students. Models for Promise programs vary depending on the amount of College Promise funding available, the number of students the program intends to serve, the number of semesters covered, and the program's eligibility and persistence criteria. The vast majority of Promise programs award funding after a student has exhausted available financial aid from the federal government, the state, or the college or university. And a growing number of programs cover expenses above and beyond tuition and fees. That's because too many students find themselves grasping to cover the costs of textbooks, transportation, food, housing, etc. even while working full-time.

**First Dollar:** In a first dollar model, a student is awarded the full amount of tuition and fees. This award does not consider or replace any other funding or grant that the student is eligible to receive (e.g., a federal Pell Grant). The “first-dollar” Promise award covers the direct costs of attending college (e.g., tuition and fees), and when combined with other student financial aid, it can help the student pay for additional and often hidden college costs that have been shown to increase student success (i.e., textbooks, transportation, childcare, school materials, etc.).

**Last Dollar:** Last dollar models fund the remaining gap between other available financial aid and the cost of tuition and fees. A student's College Promise funding is awarded only after any public funding or grants the student is eligible for are taken into account (e.g., a federal Pell Grant, state financial aid, etc.). Therefore, the total amount of "last-dollar" Promise funds a student receives varies depending on other financial aid resources that are available.

**Last Dollar Plus:** With a "last-dollar plus" model, the amount of Promise funding awarded to an eligible student takes into account any financial aid the student is eligible to receive (e.g., a federal Pell Grant, state financial aid, etc.). However, unlike a traditional “last-dollar” model, a "last-dollar plus" program offers additional financial assistance, often aimed at low-income students. This could be through a targeted stipend (e.g., a book or transportation stipend) or a minimum scholarship amount. Minimum scholarships allow students with significant financial aid from other sources (i.e. max Pell) to receive enough funding to cover tuition and fees as well as additional college expenses.

---

**Determining How to Distribute Funds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Dollar</th>
<th>Last Dollar</th>
<th>Last Dollar Plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of Tuition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promise Grant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Other Financial Aid</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kalamazoo, Michigan (First Dollar)**
The Kalamazoo Promise covers the full cost of tuition and fees for the town’s recent high school graduates to attend any public institution of higher education in Michigan and some private institutions in the state without taking into account any federal or state financial aid for which the student is eligible.

**Salt Lake City, Utah (Last Dollar)**
The Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Promise extends college opportunity to Utah residents who wish to obtain a degree by covering the cost of tuition and fees when federal grants fall short. To qualify, applicants must fill out the FAFSA and be awarded a Pell Grant.

**Buffalo, New York (Last-Dollar Plus)**
Say Yes Buffalo builds on its last-dollar scholarship by offering an Opportunity Grant that provides up to $2,000 per year that can be used toward books, fees, or room and board. These grants are awarded to Say Yes Buffalo students who are also eligible for the maximum federal Pell Grant.
Leaders of these public and private organizations often draft contracts, memoranda of understanding (MOU), and other documents to clarify roles, responsibilities, and accountability between the partners who are charged with implementing the program. Examples of such agreements can be found in the appendix of this Playbook.

**Long Beach, California** – these partners, the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC), and California State University Long Beach (CSULB), signed an MOU with the City of Long Beach to make higher education an attainable goal for every student. They have agreed to share individual student-level data when appropriate to inform their educational practice and work together to support and encourage success for all students from preschool to graduate school, and into their careers. Each partner has made individual commitments to the shared mission: for example, CSULB commits to providing additional support for students in the program who want to transfer to their institution.

**Buffalo, New York** – Say Yes Buffalo program is built on a partnership between Buffalo's Public School Districts, parents, the Buffalo Teachers Federation, and the City of Buffalo through a collective governance structure. In 2016, Say Yes pledged to provide $500,000 to run summer school classes. When the school district had to scrap plans due to financial difficulty, Say Yes signed a series of MOUs with 28 local churches to provide free classroom space. The agreement between Say Yes, local churches, and the school district ensures that all parties work together on summer school programming. This partnership ensures that Say Yes's summer school program is sustainable.

**Program Support Features**

An explicit goal of the College Promise is to build a college-going culture that results in student success. College Promise programs are not just designed to get students into college, they are also designed to help more students earn their college degrees and certificates, continue their education, and enter or advance in the workforce.

A growing body of evidence suggests that the most successful College Promise programs go beyond covering college tuition and fees by offering various support services, educational interventions, incentives, or stipends. These support services are designed to help students make a smooth transition to college, keep college affordable, and enable students to complete their programs of study and earn a degree or certificate. This is why the decision to include some features and not others is so important. For example, the higher the required GPA, fewer students will be eligible; if full-time course participation is required, fewer students who work full-time will be eligible. It is critical to think through the pros and cons of each feature, starting with the population the community most wants to serve. Some common support services include:

- Mentorships
  Some programs pair students with mentors who can help guide them through the challenges they face. Often, programs recruit volunteers to serve as these mentors. Some mentorship programs are designed to ensure that students complete the requirements to receive or maintain a College Promise...
scholarship. Others support students through the transition to college and provide advice on the many soft skills required to complete a college education. Students and mentors might engage in any number of guidance-oriented activities such as working together to establish a course of study. Additionally, mentors may clarify program requirements, such as completing the FAFSA, and encourage students to fulfill them in a timely manner.

**Tennessee** - Virginia Hughes, a Tennessee Promise student, testified to the crucial role her mentor played in her college journey: “Without tnAchieves and my mentor through the program, Laura Harrill, I would never have accomplished gaining my Associate degree, being in the college honor society, and then continuing on to the University of Tennessee where I’m achieving my lifelong dream of being a college graduate with a Bachelor’s in Anthropology. I feel that tnAchieves gives the opportunity of not only college but achieving dreams that most people from my community could only dream of.” University of Tennessee’s Center for Business and Economic Research scholars, Celeste K. Carruthers and William F. Fox, found that “a strong mentoring program coupled with a last-dollar scholarship increased a student’s likelihood of attending college by more than 500 percent” in their study, “Promise kept? Free community college and attainment in Tennessee.”

**Detroit, Michigan** - The Detroit Promise is a last-dollar scholarship for recent high school graduates to attend their local community colleges. Last year, the program expanded to include the Detroit Promise Path, which provides additional support for College Promise recipients. This support includes monthly coaching appointments paired with an incentive stipend, enhanced summer engagement including work opportunities, and a management information system that tracks student participation. After one year of evaluation, the research organization MDRC found that students who received these supplementary services were much more likely to remain enrolled in college. They also discovered that over 95% of students responded positively to their coaches, reporting mentoring to be valuable.

**Guided Pathways**
An increasing number of community colleges and universities offer guided pathways for participating students, pairing regular academic and career counseling with a default set and sequence of classes for a given course of study to reduce choice paralysis for students. These offerings can be tied to specific local workforce needs and support the transfer from two-year to four-year colleges. Guided Pathways can also require participation in cohort activities and other supportive services. Due to the robust evidence that Guided Pathways increase student success. Guided Pathways are an important strategy that a variety of community colleges are incorporating into their College Promise programs. The American Association of Community Colleges, Achieving the Dream, and other supporting partners are working together to scale Guided Pathways, helping community colleges in raising their persistence and graduation rates.

**New York, New York** - New York’s Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), which began in 2007 and has been rigorously evaluated, illustrates how community colleges can accelerate Associate degree completion within three years “by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to cover textbook costs.” As students persist to graduation, they receive transition support to transfer to four-year colleges or the workforce. CUNY’s ASAP consistently shows that graduation rates can more than double if the right combination of support is offered to students.

**College & Career Development Services**
Some Promise programs incorporate college and career development support services to help students obtain internships, career opportunities, and outside scholarships. Career centers and future centers are a prominent way for colleges to support students.
A College Promise is not truly a ‘promise’ a community can believe in unless students, families, K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, and the entire community can rely on it from year to year. This means that Promise programs must be financially sustainable. Here are some strategies to raise funds for the program:

Making the Case for Funding

When seeking funding for a Promise program, it is essential to develop clear messaging about how the Promise is designed to meet local needs. In order to appeal to varied public and private stakeholders, arguments about the need for College Promise must be adapted and aligned with the audience interests.

For example, when approaching business leaders, it is particularly effective to frame College Promise programs as an economic and workforce development initiative. In this instance, a persuasive argument in favor of the College Promise might be to highlight the lack of trained local workers for vacant jobs and growing career fields. This could be coupled with an explanation of how local businesses will be affected by a shortage of trained workers. Be sure to detail how a College Promise program can create a pipeline of future workers to close the skills gap and meet employer needs.

When advocating for College Promise before community leaders and nonprofit organizations, it is important to emphasize how free college can revitalize your community. Those advocating for College Promise can emphasize how Promise programs can attract and retain a stable population by enabling more adults to enter and advance in the labor market. Residents who are prepared for the workforce are less reliant on income assistance and other social programs. Make the case that by establishing a common vision of a community with opportunity for all, the College Promise can be leveraged to better coordinate the departments, resources, and assets of a city.

Another approach to securing funding is to emphasize the repercussions of not broadening access to higher education. Examples include how the local economy will suffer if the skills gap is left unaddressed or how the lack of a well-trained workforce will have a negative impact on residents, businesses, and city leadership.

In order to secure funding, clear program cost estimates must be shared. These estimates should be based on the best available data and informed by decisions made regarding the scope and design of your program. Combined with audience-specific arguments, having a thoughtful strategic program plan that outlines costs will demonstrate to potential funders that a College Promise program is needed, well-reasoned, and a worthwhile investment of resources.

Above all, the anticipated impacts from Promise investments must be articulated. Investors - whether they are high net-worth individuals, foundations, or community residents who want to make a contribution - need to be well-informed and excited about sharing in the vision, mission, purpose and expected outcomes of the Promise. They want to know that their investments will yield results.
Public Funding Sources

College Promise programs underway across the country receive funding from a wide range of donors and development sources. The vast majority of programs leverage multiple streams of funding from both public and private entities. Public funding streams can originate from the federal, state, and local levels. Some common public funding sources include:

**Federal Pell Grant:**
For over 45 years, the federal Pell Grant, named after Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI), has been the base of federal financial assistance to attend college for low and moderate-income families (150% of the poverty threshold or below). The Pell Grant is awarded to undergraduate students based on their families' income; it does not take merit into account. However, it does require that students achieve a minimum 2.0 GPA for subsequent Pell Grant awards.

The design of a College Promise program, whether it is a first, last, or last-dollar plus model, will determine if and how Promise funding interacts with a student's Pell Grant.

**State Financial Aid:**
Most states fund some form of a financial aid program to help reduce the cost of attending college. The requirements and award amounts for these aid packages vary widely from state to state. Some states cover the full cost of tuition and fees for eligible students at the state's public institutions, while others may cover only a portion. These programs may provide need-based aid depending on a family's income levels (like the federal Pell Grant), or focus on merit-based aid by taking into account a student's GPA or standardized test scores. Additionally, a common feature of state financial aid programs is to incentivize students to go to college within the state, much like most College Promise programs do.

Here too, the design of the local College Promise program will determine if and how the program interacts with available state financial aid packages.

**Local Public Funds**
Many Promise programs leverage local public funds, including direct appropriations from a city or county (i.e., mandatory, discretionary, one-time), local or state workforce investment funds, tax revenues, lottery funds, and endowments.

**San Francisco, California** - An example of a tax-revenue funded Promise, late San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee and Supervisor Jane Kim proposed allocating nearly $5.4 million per year to fund the city’s free community college program, Free City. The initiative is funded through a tax increase that was approved by voters in 2016. The ballot issue, Proposition W, increased the tax on the sale of commercial real estate properties valued over $5 million by one-quarter of a percent and is expected to generate $44 million in revenue annually. “As a child of working-class immigrants, I know first-hand the importance of a college education and the struggles to pay for it,” said Supervisor Kim, who implemented the strategy with Mayor Lee. “Working together, we found an economic plan that would make City College accessible to our city residents and give additional support to those students struggling the most. This commitment will provide our residents the opportunity to attend college, continue to learn, and create better lives for themselves. This is an investment in our youth, in our city, and in our future.”

**Seattle, Washington** - Another example of a publicly funded effort comes from the 13th Year Promise Scholarship in Seattle, Washington, recently expanded with support from Seattle’s City Council. With a $1.5 million investment over two years, the program will enable graduates from four Seattle high schools to receive the Promise. There is also a proposal to fund a $5 million endowment,
which would further expand the program to include more high schools. Mayor Jenny Durkan seeks to establish Seattle’s College Promise, which would build on the success of 13th Year Promise and cover high school graduates from the entire city of Seattle.

**Prince George’s County, Maryland** - County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III worked closely with K-12, community college, and other public and private partners to fund the Prince George’s County Promise Scholarship Program. “These funds represent a real breakthrough in addressing the challenges that many of our high school aged residents in Prince George’s County are facing when considering how they will fund their higher education pursuits,” said Dr. Charlene M. Dukes, President of Prince George’s Community College. “We are excited that the county has recognized that providing access to higher education is a priority and that the college is critical in helping to meet that need.” Nearly 70 percent of PGCC students require financial aid, the majority from low-income households. Ninety-three percent of the college-going population at Dr. Duke’s institution are county residents. The county and the college view the Promise as a method to reduce their students’ reliance on college loans.

### Private Funding Sources

In addition to public funding, cities and counties can obtain private donations from a variety of sources. Many existing programs have secured key donations from philanthropies (e.g., family foundations, etc.), corporations, individual families, and through establishing foundations dedicated to raising funds for Promise scholarships. Examples of private funding sources include:

**Corporate-Social Philanthropy**

Cities and counties can seek Promise funds from public and private philanthropies. Successful examples often leverage local and regional foundations with strong education priorities and relationships with their local K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities.

**Tamaqua, Pennsylvania** - Morgan Success Scholarship in Tamaqua, PA covers the tuition and fees of graduates from Tamaqua Area High School who are attending Lehigh Carbon Community College. This last dollar program is funded by the John E. Morgan Foundation whose philanthropy funds many healthcare and higher education programs.

**Decatur, IL** - The Dell and Evelyn Carroll Scholarship Fund is named after a couple from Macon, IL who believed in education and giving back to their community. With a $1 million endowment, the scholarship pays for Meridian High School and Blue Mound High School graduates to attend Richland Community College in Decatur, IL.

**Coalinga, CA** - The Corcoran Promise pays for Corcoran High School graduates in California to attend their first year at West Hills College in Coalinga. This scholarship is offered by the Corcoran Community Foundation and the West Hills Community College Foundation.

**Buffalo & Syracuse, New York; Guilford County, North Carolina** - Say Yes to Education is a nonprofit organization that began 30 years ago as a philanthropic investment from George Weiss, who wanted to help 112 elementary school students from economically disadvantaged circumstances in Philadelphia start and complete a college education. The program expanded to include Buffalo, Syracuse, and Guilford County and is now growing to other cities interested in implementing the Say Yes model that runs from kindergarten through college. Once cities meet the ambitious fundraising goal to serve every student in their community, Say Yes helps the city offer a range of services. These services include things like tutoring, after-school programming, summer camp, school-based medical care, counseling, free legal assistance, and advice on college admissions and financial aid. Say Yes communities make the commitment to give every eligible student a Promise scholarship that covers the remaining cost of tuition to any in-state public college or university, regardless of family income. Say Yes incorporates rigorous research and the community partners raise funds for this purpose from corporations, foundations, and individuals.
Corporations
Various companies have been instrumental in the funding of local Promise programs, especially companies with a vested interest in a particular community or with unfilled jobs in need of a trained workforce.

Kenosha County, Wisconsin - The Gateway Promise is an example of corporate and business partnerships. The program ensures that eligible high school graduates from Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties can attend Gateway Technical College tuition-free. The Gateway Promise is funded by local businesses—Snap-On Tools, SC Johnson, InSinkerator, and others—looking to invest in their community’s young people and train the next generation of workers for good quality jobs.

College Foundations
Many community colleges and an increasing number of four-year universities are raising College Promise funds through their institutional foundations. For example, the Santa Barbara Promise, the Ventura Promise, and the Santa Clara Promise are sponsored by their college foundations, raising funds to cover tuition and fees for eligible students. They raise funds for the Promise through individual and corporate gifts, hosting galas, running campus markets, and a host of creative revenue-generating strategies to benefit their students.

Individual and Family Donations
In some cases, generous members of a community provide the funds to create or sustain a local Promise. While this situation is not applicable to every Promise, individuals or families with strong ties to a community and the means to make a difference have had deep and lasting impacts on programs around the country.

Vance County, North Carolina - The VanGuarentee, a last-dollar Promise scholarship at Vance Granville Community College in North Carolina, was established through a gift from the estate of Wilbert A. Edward, an alumnus of the college. As a result of this gift, every resident of Vance, Granville, Franklin, and Warren counties can pursue a college degree regardless of age.

Children’s Savings Accounts for College (CSAs)
While many College Promise programs cover tuition and fees, most Promise investments only fund a small portion of the total cost of attendance students must bear. To increase financial education and to help families save for college, some Promise programs are beginning to incorporate Children’s Savings Accounts (CSAs) into their program design. CSAs are incentivized savings or investment accounts established for children to help finance college costs, sometimes the same as or akin to 529 savings accounts. They provide a tangible asset base and give students and parents savings experience, including financial education and experience interacting with financial institutions. CSA incentives are leveraged to cultivate a savings and college-bound identity among students and their families.

Wabash County, Indiana - The Wabash County Promise represents a unique College Promise model, illustrating how foundations, businesses, nonprofits, and education organizations can leverage CSAs to save for college. With financial support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Wabash administers the program which uses CSAs as an incentive for students and families to save and plan for college. Students become eligible for Promise scholarships in three ways: by reaching academic benchmarks, by undertaking college readiness activities, and by working with their families to meet savings goals that are matched by the Initiative.
San Francisco, California—The City and County of San Francisco partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to establish its Kindergarten to College (K2C) program supported by the Citi Foundation, Prosperity Now, and other public and private organizations. All SFUSD students entering kindergarten receive a $50 CSA and families can increase these savings by meeting specific incentives.

Oakland, California—The Oakland Promise’s “Brilliant Baby” pilot program recently opened $500 CSAs for 100 children born into poverty. The program offers parents savings incentives and matches up to $500 in additional dollars to add to their child’s account (see appendix for program flyer).

Best Practices in Fundraising

If your Promise program plans to seek private donations, here are some best practices to consider:

Where to Start
Fundraising is all about building relationships with the potential funders to help them understand what a College Promise program in your city or county would mean, and to encourage their investment. To start, identify a few key potential funders that are likely to donate to a College Promise program. A few suggestions from other Promise programs that have found success include community foundations, companies within sectors that are most likely to be impacted by the skills gap (i.e., healthcare, IT, financial services, advanced manufacturing, auto industry, real estate), the local chamber of commerce, workforce investment board members, and large companies or larger philanthropies with a regional focus. To attract individual support, identify well resourced and philanthropically-minded individuals who typically give to community and education initiatives can help open the door to others. They can introduce you to their network or host events to continue to raise money and build relationships. Additionally, many College Promise programs have seen success reaching out to current and retired educators and alumni.

Taking the time to set up one-on-one meetings with these individuals, companies, and foundations will be critical. These meetings will help build relationships with potential funders. Securing a few large donations early on from these conversations can help build momentum. Geoff Green, the chief executive officer of the Santa Barbara City College Foundation, says his main goal is to raise enough money to fund start-up funding for the Promise. “Our plan is to raise the first three years as quick as we can,” said Green. “That buys us the time to figure out the long term sustainability plan, which will absolutely involve an endowment of some kind.”

Another avenue is to host business roundtables with prospective funders to share information about the potential impact of the Promise and the amount of money that needs to be raised. Arranging for a trusted validator such as a prominent business leader, chamber representative, or local United Way leader to share his or her support for the program makes the case for the program’s value from beneficiaries and supporters that represent different sectors of the community.

Bringing potential funders face to face with students that the program is serving, as well as mentors and educators, is an important strategy to employ. These interactions demonstrate the human impact of the program and help build a sense of ownership. This is also a best practice for active funders, especially as a tactic to encourage them to increase their investment.

Leveraging Supportive Elected Officials
As your Promise program begins to emerge, its strongest advocate should be the elected official(s) championing it. The reach and voice of these elected officials can help recruit early donors and establish a clear and compelling vision for the community as a whole. Through local media, elected officials can create community-wide buy-in and set financial benchmarks and other important goals to be accomplished. This can be particularly effective for creating ‘calls to action’ around deadlines.
Recruiting Students

One of the primary goals of the College Promise is to build a college-going culture throughout the community. That’s why it is essential to include K-12 school district and nonprofit leaders in the planning process from the start. Seeking out their insights and getting their feedback regarding program development builds ownership and makes a difference. The partners feel valued and respected, especially when asked to assist in building the broader community of support. Empowering them to assume appropriate leadership roles in the implementation of the College Promise expands the circle of committed champions invested in being part of a well-educated, thriving community.

A successful College Promise program will benefit from effective communication between high schools, community colleges, and universities to build Promise programs that expose students and their families to college opportunities early and often. This collaboration could include classroom visits from community college staff, ensuring that high school guidance counselors tell students about the College Promise, and leading field trips to the local community colleges and their feeder universities to learn about the Promise and talk with people currently benefiting from it.

The community’s education partners should be encouraged to work together to produce targeted online ads and joint mailings to students and families to help them understand the specifics of the College Promise and the opportunity it presents. Publicizing the program through local media outlets is also helpful as a shared activity and will also save in marketing costs. The underlying goal behind these efforts must be to celebrate the Promise and emphasize the community college and its partner institutions as valid and affordable pathways for student success, beginning at an early age.

Administering and Sustaining the Promise

Tracking, Follow Up, and Maintenance

Establishing strong norms and structures is essential both for making the case to the community and for successful fundraising. Building and managing systems to track donor outreach, commitments, funds received, thank yous, and scheduling regular conversations with donors and those who have not yet given is critical for success and continuing momentum. It is exciting to turn a ‘no’ or ‘not now’ into a ‘yes’ by showcasing progress and sharing success stories, especially those from students, families, companies, and nonprofits who are benefiting. Leveraging other significant donations to create a sense of competition can also be an effective tactic.

Providing opportunities for donors to feel and grow a sense of ownership about the success of the Promise program is essential. Arranging meetings with Promise students and hearing their stories is powerful. Donors and prospects should be invited to attend the Promise announcement, orientation sessions for new Promise students, and graduation ceremonies. They can also be asked to speak to the community about why they made an investment in the Promise. All of these practices will help build new opportunities to engage potential donors and to ask for further donations from those who have already given, especially if paired with data to demonstrate the program’s success.

Administering and Sustaining the Promise

Recruiting Students

One of the primary goals of the College Promise is to build a college-going culture throughout the community. That’s why it is essential to include K-12 school district and nonprofit leaders in the planning process from the start. Seeking out their insights and getting their feedback regarding program development builds ownership and makes a difference. The partners feel valued and respected, especially when asked to assist in building the broader community of support. Empowering them to assume appropriate leadership roles in the implementation of the College Promise expands the circle of committed champions invested in being part of a well-educated, thriving community.

A successful College Promise program will benefit from effective communication between high schools, community colleges, and universities to build Promise programs that expose students and their families to college opportunities early and often. This collaboration could include classroom visits from community college staff, ensuring that high school guidance counselors tell students about the College Promise, and leading field trips to the local community colleges and their feeder universities to learn about the Promise and talk with people currently benefiting from it. The community’s education partners should be encouraged to work together to produce targeted online ads and joint mailings to students and families to help them understand the specifics of the College Promise and the opportunity it presents. Publicizing the program through local media outlets is also helpful as a shared activity and will also save in marketing costs. The underlying goal behind these efforts must be to celebrate the Promise and emphasize the community college and its partner institutions as valid and affordable pathways for student success, beginning at an early age.

Lynchburg, Virginia

- Beacon of Hope is a nonprofit that provides scholarships, mentoring services, counseling support, and local business partnerships to create a college-going culture among K-12 students. This program manages, staffs, and funds “Future Centers” in the county’s high schools, which provide students with guidance on financial aid and college applications. The first female mayor of Lynchburg, Mayor Joan Foster, is also the director of development for Beacon of Hope. “We are so pleased to have so many community members partner with Beacon of Hope,” said Mayor Foster. “Together, we can ensure that our public school youth have a hope and a promise that they can get to graduation day with a plan in place for their future, whether it be technical or trade school, or a two-year or four-year postsecondary degree.”
Oakland, California - The East Bay College Fund is partnering with Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and her team to provide the Oakland Promise to local high school graduates. The organization provides scholarships, mentoring, college counseling, and overall life skills training. It also offers “Future Centers” in its high schools to help students design their college and career plans, apply to college, and receive academic and career counseling.

Tennessee - tnAchieves serves as the partnering organization for Tennessee Promise and helps provide wrap-around support services to increase student access and success with the goal of raising Tennessee’s postsecondary attainment rate. To qualify for the Tennessee Promise last-dollar scholarship, each student must meet with a volunteer mentor. tnAchieves annually recruits and trains about 9,000 volunteers to serve as mentors to nearly 60,000 Tennessee Promise applicants as they transition from high school to college. The organization also helps students complete their FAFSA applications. Nearly every high school senior across Tennessee engages with tnAchieves as part of their journey to college.

Launching and Implementing Promise

Establishing a College Promise program is an exciting achievement for your community. That’s why it is so important to make a splash with your announcement and program launch. Many programs build rallies with community leaders, partners, students, and the press. Not only is this a way of recognizing the partners who helped develop the program, but it also advertises the program to students and their families. These high-energy launch events help build the community-wide college-going culture that is so crucial to your program’s success.

Of course, there are alternative, high-impact platforms for celebrating your program. For example, State of the City or State of the County addresses allow mayors and county leaders to highlight the College Promise as part of their bold vision for the region’s future. Additionally, digital and traditional media amplification ensures your message goes beyond your network’s contacts. Building and maintaining social media accounts that engage the community will be helpful to your program’s long-term reach and impact.

While a program launch is a key opportunity to build public awareness of the College Promise, it shouldn’t stop there. Identify key community events and activities to draw attention to your program to support its growth. Some Promise communities celebrate the first day of school for the inaugural Promise class, observe their program’s anniversary, facilitate local media interviews with Promise graduates, celebrate workforce success for adult Promise beneficiaries, or host a spring Promise Gala. In order for your program to become a permanent part of your community’s culture, maintain a steady drumbeat of achievements and milestones through events and media. Energize and inspire the Promise recipients, their families, residents, donors, and the host of partners and participants that care about the community to continue their support.

Los Angeles, California - In 2016, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti hosted a rally celebrating the launch of the Los Angeles College Promise, which provides one year of tuition-free community college for eligible high school graduates. The event also featured Dr. Jill Biden and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, while the audience was filled with community college and high school students. The event was rounded out by a live band and promotional T-shirts. Mayor Garcetti first introduced the free community college proposal during his annual State of the City speech in 2016. “Tonight, Los Angeles will become the largest city in the nation to commit ourselves to a new goal,” said Mayor Garcetti. “Every hard-working student who graduates from [Los Angeles Unified School District] will receive one free year of community college.” The launch event and related press coverage helped build public awareness of the program as college administrators and city staff approached prospective partners and donors one year in advance of the program’s implementation. Mayor Garcetti is now encouraging Children’s Savings Accounts to advance the Promise.
Maintaining Public Presence

Building a strong, inspiring, and memorable brand for your program is an important way of weaving it seamlessly into the fabric of your community. Your program should have a succinct name, a logo that draws the attention of students and families, and a vision statement or motto that underscores the ‘promise’ your program is making to the community. It is important to issue press releases in conjunction with every major program update. Building press events and ensuring that your team is regularly promoting College Promise in K-12 schools and community organizations will help build the college-going culture to inspire youth and adults who worry that higher education is increasingly out of reach.

Tracking Results and Evaluating Progress

It is vital to have clear metrics to measure the success of your College Promise program and to invest in the infrastructure to accurately track results and evaluate the Promise from the start. Longstanding College Promise researchers Dr. Michelle Miller-Adams of the W.E. UpJohn Institute for Employment Research and Dr. Jennifer Iriti of the University of Pittsburgh highly recommend tracking the following indicators and reporting publicly to the community on an annual basis:

- Demographics of the student population served
- Rate of student eligibility (if eligibility criteria exist)
- Rate of student scholarship acceptance
- Postsecondary institutions attended by scholarship recipients
- Amount of money spent by a scholarship program
- Additional scholarship dollars accessed by Promise recipients
- Academic performance of Promise scholars in postsecondary institutions
- Postsecondary retention, progression, and completion
- Degrees or certificates earned by Promise recipients
- University transfer
- Other indicators may include student debt, successful employment, etc.

The practice of actively tracking and sharing results of your program is essential to ensure that the design of your program is effective, highlighting areas for adaptation where necessary. It is also an excellent means of garnering and retaining support for your College Promise program with stakeholders and funders. Be sure to have plans in place for collection, storage, and analysis of your data. Consider partnering with policy group to more effectively analyze the data you collect and adjust your program as deemed necessary.

Most importantly, as new outside research is produced or novel Promise programs emerge, be willing to change or upgrade your program features and infrastructure to keep in line with best practices and the best possible outcomes for your students.
Conclusion

College Promise initiatives are a bold and timely response to our nation’s growing need to make earning a college degree more affordable, accessible, and attainable for any hardworking student. These initiatives address our country’s increasing concerns about educational inequities, the achievement gap, unemployment, the skills gap, economic volatility, student debt, and public health. Communities can only thrive if more residents are equipped with the education and skills they need for our rapidly changing economy. Cities, towns, and counties with a well-educated workforce are happier, healthier, and more prosperous than those ill-equipped for the employment demands of the 21st Century. Local elected officials are uniquely positioned to make a case for this crucial investment and to rally community leaders to develop Promise programs. Already, hundreds of local and statewide elected officials are doing just that. From San Diego to Wichita to Boston, and from Seattle to Dallas to Jacksonville, College Promise programs are launching and communities are identifying ways to sustain them for the future. We welcome your community to take part in the College Promise movement.

Thank you for your commitment to lead this initiative. The Playbook is a first step to build understanding and tools for your Promise program; the College Promise Campaign is eager to help new and established programs move forward to build a successful Promise for your region’s students. Our team is prepared to support local elected officials and their staffs in the following ways:

- Connecting to the national network of College Promise leaders, experts, and practitioners.
- Providing research, advice, and help to plan, launch, or expand a College Promise program.
- Working to engage education, business, government, philanthropy, nonprofit, and student leaders to support and invest in a local College Promise.
- Supporting digital and earned media coverage about the College Promise in local communities.

We invite you to reach out to our team for further advice or guidance to develop your Promise program. You can access further information about Promise policy, research, tools, and information at CollegePromise.org
# Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Jose Promise Strategic Plan</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach MOU</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland Kindergarten to College Flyer</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville Design Choices Chart</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBCC Promise Workflow</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBCC Promise Cost Projection per Student</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBCC Promise Budget</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBCC Promise Fundraising Pitch</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Dorado Promise Scholarship Application Form</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TnAchieves Performance Metrics (pages 21-24)</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon of Hope Program Evaluation Slides (slides 12-13)</td>
<td>xxiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SJ Promise Overview

1. The San Jose Promise is built upon three pillars: attaining college readiness in high school; participating in the Promise program at community college; and utilizing corporate and philanthropic partnerships to build college and career pathways. In conjunction with the launch of SJ Promise, San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College announced a significant expansion of College Promise scholarships that, when leveraged with other sources of financial aid, ensure up to two years of free community college for approximately 500 qualifying students next school year alone. The College Promise scholarships are focused on low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students.

2. Promise aims to improve high school graduation rates and increase college enrollment and success through 3 strategies
   - College Readiness Programs
     - Community College dual enrollment courses to provide high school students with free, on-site, in-school community college remediation and college-level classes
     - College readiness support, including assistance with college and financial aid applications
   - San Jose Promise College Scholarship
     - Provide up to 2 consecutive years of full-time college funding with a focus on low-income, first-gen, and historically underrepresented students, including undocumented (AB 540) youth
   - College and Career Pathway Partnerships
     - Establish partnerships with service providers, and corporate and philanthropic partners that support college, career pathways, and success through social and academic wrap-around services

3. Key leaders and stakeholders:
   - Mayor’s Office & City of San Jose
   - San Jose Public Library / City-wide Education Strategy and Policy
   - Work2future – City of San Jose’s workforce development program
   - Chancellor, San Jose – Evergreen Community College District
   - Silicon Valley Community Foundation – SJ Promise Donor Advised Fund (an organized method and platform to accept private donations)
   - Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District
   - Chancellor, West Valley-Mission Community College District
   - CEO, Sobrato Family Foundation

Making A Compelling Case for San Jose College Promise Program
San Jose Promise Strategic Plan

**Problem:** Although students have the motivation to attend college, financial barriers to affording college and living necessities can often be significant disincentives in achieving college success.

- Examples of financial barriers
  - 43% of the cost of being a California community college student is housing.
  - 30% of students are solely responsible for their housing costs.
  - 44% of financial aid recipients would work more hours to afford textbooks.
  - 32% of students are very likely to take fewer credits than they want due to family responsibilities.
  - Students who work more than 15 hours per week are much less likely to graduate than those who work less.
- Today, only 32 (up from 30 from 2 years ago) of every 100 students will experience college success (defined as completing their BA, AA, or Technical Career Certificate within 6 years).
- About 70% of students enrolling in SJECCD are very low income or on government assistance and therefore eligible for the Board of Governor’s Fee Waiver Program (BOG Waiver). The BOG waiver is funded by the state of California and covers tuition costs for community college students. The SJ Promise program is intended to provide scholarships for students who do not necessarily qualify for/utilize BOG yet still face financial barriers. Unlike the BOG waiver, the Promise scholarship does not have eligibility requirements such as an income threshold as BOG does. The BOG waiver and SJ Promise are funded by two separate sources of state dollars.

**Vision:** San Jose Promise is built on a long-term solution for preparing today’s high school graduates to be competent players in our unique Silicon Valley economy.

1. Ensure that all San José students are:
   - Confident that college is a real and affordable possibility for them
   - College-ready with the skills and support to be successful
   - Job-ready for the San José and regional Silicon Valley employers of tomorrow
2. Create a regional SJ College Promise that offers SJ Jose high school graduates a seamless highway to college and career success that links San Jose high school districts, three South Bay Community College Districts, local and Bay Area universities, and the Silicon Valley business community.
3. Have sustainable strategies in place that will make SJ Promise a permanent component of a regional Silicon Valley Promise that will work toward system and regional-level solutions to college and career readiness and success.
   - Examples of sustainable strategies
     - Advocate for additional state funding from the CA College Promise program
     - Advocate for federal funding which there is no designated pool to draw from
     - Obtain more BOG waiver funding so that it covers not just tuition but books, transportation costs, administrative school fees
San Jose Promise Strategic Plan

- Obtain sustainable, corporate, philanthropic support
- To collect earned revenue from investments to be allocated toward Promise

Goals for 2025:
1. Increase the college success rate by 50%. 2015 data shows that only 30 out of every 100 freshman high school students were successful (meaning they received their AA, BA, technical certificate, by 6 years’ time). A 50% increase in success rate would raise the bar to 45 out of every 100 students who achieve success within 6 years.
2. Reach the following benchmarks for SJ Promise students by 2020:
   - Increase the high school graduation rate of San Jose high school students meeting UC/CSU entrance requirements from 47% to 50%
   - Demonstrate that 25% of SJ Promise recipients complete their AA or Career Certificate within 2 years, compared to 9% of students today
   - Demonstrate that 40% of students completing their degree within two years successfully transfer to a public postsecondary university in California (available baseline data shows that today it takes 5 years for 50% of degree holders to successfully transfer)
3. Demonstrate that 90% of transfers complete their bachelor’s degree within 4 years.

Leveraging Existing City Services and Support
1. SJ Works – a citywide initiative employing high school students in part-time work, primarily serving underrepresented and low-income youth
   - Administered by Work2Future foundation, which has a branch working with the City of San Jose
   - Only for high school students
2. Critical Bridge – a new program that aims to create a culture of mentorship for high school students through college
   - Identifies, through organizations like AARP and the private sector, mentors who work with SJ Works/Promise participants
     - A subprogram called Generation 2 Generation matches 55+ mentors with younger people
3. Service Year – a scholarship program for students, preferably a Promise recipient, entering community college where they can do an internship program at the end of which they receive an education award
   - Internships are typically at nonprofits and the City of San Jose through a federally funded program such as Americorps
4. SJ Public Library Digital Literacy and Access – the library is heading an initiative on addressing the digital divide (those without access to computers, Internet, basic computer skills) and education strategy

The visual below shows the relationship between each program as described above. To briefly summarize, SJ Works is an opportunity to employ youth and give them job experience. Upon graduating high school they are eligible for College Promise at which point Critical Bridge works...
to match the student with a mentor through the Encore and Gen 2 Gen program. Once in college, students can do an internship through Service Year to gain more job experience. Within 6 years, students should obtain their AA, Bachelor’s, or technical certificate.

**Funding Sources**
- Received total $2.25M from a California state grant called CA College Promise Innovation Grant Program (Prop 98 General Funds)
  - San Jose-Evergreen Community College District received $1.5M (max dollar amount to be received by a district)
  - West Valley College received $750K (max dollar amount to be received by a single college)
- How these funds are used
  - Scholarships for Promise participants
    - “Last Dollar” scholarships
  - San Jose-Evergreen Community College District funds 2 cohorts of 500 students each; each cohort participates for 2 years
  - West Valley-Mission Community College District funds a cohort of 300 students\(^1\); currently each cohort participates for one semester
- City of San Jose: $150K
- Private donors responding to Mayor’s request: $310K

**CHALLENGE:** 90% of SJECCD students who complete a math assessment test into developmental math (not collegiate level math). 84% of SJECCD students who complete an

\(^1\) West Valley College: Their enrollment number of 300 students is only a portion of the total students participating in their Promise program.
English assessment test into developmental English (not collegiate level English). Bottom line, most high school graduates are not prepared for college level math and English courses.

**RESPONSE:** All SJ Promise students who have not completed A-G requirements in high school and assess at developmental math and/or English levels will be enrolled in a 6-week summer bridge program that will include math and English as well as a Guidance Course (8 college units total). SJECCD will provide “in kind” contribution of 2 bridge cohorts ($30,000 in year one).

**CHALLENGE:** Tuition costs

**RESPONSE:** 70% of SJECCD students qualify for a BOGW (Board of Governors Waiver) that waives tuition fees. 30% do not qualify for BOGW. Our District will ensure that at least 100% of BOGW eligible students will have tuition waived. For the 30% who do not qualify for BOGW, tuition costs must be fund-raised. Advocacy success produced the signing into the law by Governor Brown the California College Promise which adds additional funding so that all first-year community college students can attend tuition-free.

**CHALLENGE:** Total costs of community college (books, fees, tuition, transportation, etc.). The average cost, excluding housing, is $3000.

**RESPONSE:** The SJ Promise scholarship supplements any other financial aid that a student can receive (i.e. BOG Waiver, Pell Grant, etc.) as a Last Dollar-in scholarship to ensure that every SJ Promise student’s college costs are fully covered with the exception of housing.

**CHALLENGE:** Persistence can be very difficult, particularly among low-income students

**RESPONSE:** The SJ Promise scholarship fully covers two years of full-time community college. In order to ensure persistence and success, students receive a variety of wraparound services including the summer bridge program, supports to ensure maximum access to benefits including financial aid such as CalWorks or Social Security, and academic supports such as mentoring and tutoring.

**SAN JOSE PROMISE STUDENTS WILL:**

1. Graduate from SJ high school (beginning in June, 2010)
2. Attend mandatory summer orientation (Ed plan, enroll in 12 units of fall classes)
3. Enroll in Summer Bridge (if they do not complete A-G requirements, students must take placement exam and if enroll in bridge if they assess into developmental Math and/or English)
4. Receive Priority Registration
5. Enroll in Math and English during their first semester
6. Enroll/complete 12 units each semester
7. Attend mandatory meeting 1x/yr (opportunity for SJ Mayor to address SJ Promise Scholars and for SJECCD to gather input from students—survey/focus groups)
8. Will receive 2nd year (max) tuition/books if a 2.0 GPA is maintained; must also serve as peer tutor
9. Be tracked to monitor progress, receive counseling and financial resource assistance
THE PROMISE:

We promise the opportunity of quality college education and career preparation to every student in the Long Beach Unified School District.

BACKGROUND:

The Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC), California State University Long Beach (CSULB) and the city of Long Beach (City) have created a partnership called the Long Beach College Promise (The Promise) to make higher education an attainable goal for every student.

The Long Beach education community has a responsibility to prepare its young people for successful careers and productive lives. Today and going forward, our regional economy is tied to the global economy. To prepare our young people for success, we must offer nothing less than a world-class education and the opportunity to pursue a meaningful career. Each student needs and deserves an opportunity to earn a postsecondary credential — and often a college degree. The future of Long Beach depends upon our effectiveness in developing a well-educated and engaged citizenry and innovation force to sustain and advance the economy of the city and surrounding region.

OUR GOALS:

To meet this challenge, The Promise partners commit to these goals over the next 10 years:

- Provide a world-class education from preschool to graduate school that prepares Long Beach students for successful engagement in the global knowledge economy.
- Increase the number of children attending preschool.
- Increase the number of high school students participating in work experience internships.
- Increase the percentage of LBUSD students who are prepared for and attend college directly from high school.
- Increase the percentage of LBCC students who earn degrees and/or career and technical certificates.
- Increase the percentage of LBCC students who successfully transfer to CSULB or another four-year college or university.
- Increase the percentage of CSULB students who graduate with a bachelor's degree and/or advanced degrees.
- Reduce and eliminate the achievement gaps that exist among ethnic and socioeconomic groups at LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB.
- Raise the educational attainment rate of the community.
- Increase community engagement in supporting and participating in The Promise.
OUR COMMITMENTS:

1. We promise to provide information, services and resources to help Long Beach students and their families prepare for college.

LBUSD promises that, starting in 4th grade and continuing through the senior year of high school, students and families will be offered active assistance in:

- Learning about college opportunities and the value of a college education.
- Visiting college campuses.
- Learning about, taking and completing college preparatory courses.
- Preparing for college.
- Applying for college admission.
- Learning about and applying for college financial aid opportunities.
- Applying for college financial aid.

The city of Long Beach promises to:

- Assist LBUSD in providing quality worked-based learning activities to high school students.
- Collaborate with LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB to ensure that all students in the city are college and career ready upon graduation from high school.

2. We promise to help students successfully transition to and succeed in college and provide opportunities in career and technical education.

LBCC promises that all students from LBUSD will be offered active assistance in:

- A tuition-free first year of higher education at LBCC if eligibility requirements are met.
- Learning about and applying for college and financial aid.
- Accessing early college credit opportunities, including dual enrollment and credit-by-exam.
- Transitioning from high school and succeeding in college and/or career goals.
- Accessing credit-bearing coursework and efficient student education planning.
- Career and technical education and certification in numerous fields.
- Learning about opportunities for transfer to CSULB and other four-year universities.
- Completing requirements and applying for transfer to a four-year university.

CSULB promises that all students from LBUSD or LBCC will be offered active assistance in:

- Applying for admission to CSULB.
- Transitioning from high school or community college and succeeding at CSULB.
- Meeting requirements for a bachelor's degree.
- Learning about and applying for college financial aid.
- Preparing for careers and graduate school.

3. We promise to provide the opportunity to earn a high-quality bachelor's or advanced degree to all LBUSD and LBCC students who successfully prepare for college.

CSULB promises that:

- All LBUSD students who successfully complete CSULB minimum college preparatory requirements will be offered admission to CSULB and have an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree.
- All LBCC students who successfully complete CSULB minimum community college transfer requirements will be offered admission to CSULB and have an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree.
4. We promise to work together to deliver these promises for the young people and families of the Long Beach area.

LBUSD, LBCC, CSULB and the city of Long Beach will work together on all of the activities that comprise the Long Beach College Promise. We will share individual student-level data when appropriate to inform our educational practice and work together to support and encourage success for all students, from preschool to graduate school, and into their careers. We will work together to provide, assess, improve and expand high-quality, world-class educational opportunities in the Long Beach community.

Signed on the 13th day of November 2017 by:

Christopher J. Steinhauser, superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District

Reagan F. Romali, superintendent-president, Long Beach City College

Jane Close Conoley, president, California State University Long Beach

Robert Garcia, mayor, city of Long Beach
## Key Elements of KINDERGARTEN TO COLLEGE

### College-Going Culture

Starting in Kindergarten, students get on the path to college through:

- College lesson plans
- K2C launch event
- College visits
- Parent workshops
- And MUCH MORE

### Early College Scholarship

- $100 for college for all K and 1st grade students at K2C schools*
- Available once a student graduates from an Oakland public high school
  - Can be used towards 2-year, 4-year and CTE programs

*To be eligible, must attend at least 4 non-consecutive years in Oakland public schools.

### College Savings Account

- K2C supports families to open 529 college savings accounts
- Family-owned
- Grows over time
- K2C deposits $50 when you open and $50 when you save any amount for 6 separate months within the first year*

*Incentives are available for all K and 1st grade families and the first 500 TK & 2nd-5th grade families at K2C schools.
## Reflection on Louisville Promise Design Key Characteristics

### Universal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation: Universal</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Ramifications</th>
<th>Weiss Input</th>
<th>Listening Session Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All means all</td>
<td>• Universal disrupts current financial aid structure</td>
<td>• Scholarship dollars flow disproportionately to middle and upper income students – so not equitable</td>
<td>• Universal helps maintain support of political leaders long-term</td>
<td>• While universality not directly addressed, there were many comments how this could help to overcome “scare” of college costs and loans, the lack of “cool factor” for college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear message of hope</td>
<td>• Research shows merit-based is not as effective at reaching marginalized student populations</td>
<td>• May create barriers to donors who want to focus only on need</td>
<td>• Not just viewed as “low-income” student program</td>
<td>• A few asked if “for all” why not include Catholic schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brings more state &amp; federal dollars to Louisville students</td>
<td>• Simplicity of messaging, best bet for true culture change</td>
<td>• Do not typically have an impact on student performance during elementary and secondary but rather have their effect on enrollment and completion</td>
<td>• Think of as more like “social security” with a direct connection to a universal commitment to work force readiness and broad based economic revitalization</td>
<td>• Some employers felt students should have “skin in the game” by staying in Louisville after getting degree, or providing community service, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for greater enrollment increases</td>
<td>• Universal approaches have been found to have a substantial positive effect on college completion across groups, with the greatest gains among students of color</td>
<td>• Universal helps maintain support of political leaders long-term</td>
<td>• Can transform communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes system of financial aid more effective (e.g. scholarship application requires FAFSA completion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• More likely to capture all students in need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### “Last” Dollar

#### Full Tuition & Fees & Opportunity Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation: Full Tuition</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Ramifications</th>
<th>Weiss Input</th>
<th>Listening Session Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tuition removed as a barrier</td>
<td>• Clear, powerful message</td>
<td>• Tuition and fees are not total cost of attendance, so some students may have still have challenges, but it does address issue of students having “skin in the game”</td>
<td>• Opportunity grant a cornerstone of Say Yes city scholarships to ensure not just another middle-class program</td>
<td>• Parents strongly felt that the cost of college deters students from attending. They firmly agreed with the inclusion of the opportunity grant but cautioned to structure the additional funds carefully. Students need immediate access to the funds for when an emergency arises but also need guidance on how to utilize those funds appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most cost-effective in that we leverage state and federal dollars</td>
<td>• Opportunity grant addresses higher need of total cost of attendance for low-income students</td>
<td>• It does limit individual choice (in comparison to a portable grant)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers reacted favorably to the suggestion of the opportunity grant. They know many students who faced gaps in funding and believe there is a strong need for options like the opportunity grant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Since Tuition scholarship dollars flow to upper income students, marry with Opportunity Grant</td>
<td>• Opportunity grant addresses disparity in equity in terms of scholarship pay-outs</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Employers strongly felt tuition not enough, must be matched with guidance and exposure to careers and how college connects; starting in middle school or earlier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Recommendation:** In-State 2 Year Public Intuitions

**Rationale**
- Good first phase
- Feasible
- Addresses workforce needs
- Challenges Jefferson to continue improvement in student success strategies
- Action in a time of need
- Less intimidating to those questioning college
- Keeps us competitive with other place-based scholarships

**Ramifications**
- Limits choice of institution and geographic location
- Raises questions about capacity and performance at 2-year institutions
- Could perpetuate under matching
- Questions about state responsibility or direction

**Weiss Input**
- This would provide a starting place that allows for test and learning
- Next step could expand to need based plus 2
- We recommend including strong advising, career planning programs for students at the 2 yr. institutions (Achieving the Dream as potential partner)

**Listening Sessions**
- Reactions from student and parent focus groups have demonstrated overwhelming support for free community and technical college. Parents believe this is a great starting point for students who need additional support.
- Reactions from teachers and counselors show that they already recommend 2-year institutions as an affordable option as a pathway to a 4-year degree. Teachers also recognized the need for additional support for students to be successful in more rigorous classes.
- Employers felt such a 2-year offer would help meet workforce needs and highlight technical and trade options.
### SBCC Promise Workflow

**KEY** **BOLD** = student capture point  **Highlighted** = question remaining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| application | 1. Student applies for SBCC using Open CCC site  
   a. Include link in supplemental application section for student to read about Promise. Student may then select "Yes" to indicate relinquishment of FERPA and interest in Promise  
   2. Once completed, student is prompted to take the following steps:  
   a. Visit SBCC website  
   b. Apply for financial aid  
   c. AB540 exemption  
   d. Prepare for transfer  
   e. Additional links | 1. College receives application  
   2. College sends automated e-mails:  
   a. Athletics welcome  
   b. Welcome to SBCC from President (letter from President, link to enrollment checklist)  
   c. Application received from Admissions (prompt to create Pipeline Student Portal)  
   d. Pipeline Account Setup from Admissions  
   3. College processes application in Admissions office  
   4. Admissions sends list of in-district high school completers and students who marked "yes" as interested in Promise to Foundation | 1. Foundation generates e-mail to list of in-district high school completers and students who marked "yes" as interested in Promise, informing them of potential eligibility for the Promise and directing them to visit the SBCC Promise webpage to learn more  
   2. Student is directed to "opt in" during registration process via Pipeline  
   3. IT will send spreadsheet with student names and K-numbers to Foundation and Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Finance, Bookstore |
| student portal | 1. Student visits SBCC website and signs up for student portal  
   2. Begin to manage college transactions (check requirements, register, etc.)  
   a. IT has built webpage: link to sbccpromise.org to learn more, and enable checkbox on registration page for students to commit to eligibility requirements and opt in | 1. College adds Promise ad to portal with link to sbccpromise.org  
   2. As eligible student names and K-numbers are collected, IT will note “SBCC Promise Eligible Student” in Portal attribute | 1. Foundation designs ad for portal to link to Promise info webpage |
| financial aid | 1. Student completes FAFSA/BOG-W online  
   2. Scholarships? Add question about Promise eligibility/participation to application?  
   3. Promise eligibility noted? Fees and books | 1. FAO notes waivers and financial aid (BOG-W, FAFSA) in student record  
   2. FAO credits student accounts with BOG-W | |
| orientation | 1. Online orientation | 1. IT and Enrollment Services update to include Promise info (in pathway for in-district high school students) | |
| assessment | 1. Assessments | | |
| prerequisites (including transcripts) | 1. Prerequisites noted | | |
| advising/  
   counseling/  
   student  
   educational  
   plan | 1. Online advising includes a note to contact the FAO for budgeting and financial aid advising?  
   2. SEP done online or in person | 1. Academic Counseling uses Starfish/SARS alerts to note who is from a local high school; if student is eligible for Promise but has not applied, notify student of opportunity and redirect him/her to webpage  
   2. Academic counselors meet at high schools each month and inform students of the opportunity  
   3. Academic Counseling tracks meetings with Promise students in Starfish/SARS  
   4. Academic Counseling will develop schedule for meetings (A-D Oct/Nov, E-G Nov/Apr, etc.)  
   5. Academic Counseling will schedule option for make-ups as needed  
   6. If no meeting is scheduled/completed, there will be a hold on the student's registration the following semester | 1. Foundation works with various departments to track regular meetings with Promise students in order to verify students remain eligible  
   a. Which counselors qualify for students to meet requirement?  
   Whoever their assigned counselor is (may be EOPS, STEM, etc.; all meetings are noted in Starfish/SARS) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>registration</td>
<td>1. Priority registration (local high school graduates)</td>
<td>1. Student must register full-time (unit load may vary based on program or special circumstances)</td>
<td>1. Foundation works with Admissions to verify students are enrolled full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Students complete commitment form on SBCC Promise landing page</td>
<td>2. IT sends list of registered Promise students (noted in Pipeline/Banner) to Foundation</td>
<td>2. At census date, IT sends list of student names and K-numbers to Foundation, Student Finance and to Bookstore to confirm students’ tuition/fees, books/supplies are waived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Student Finance notes remaining balance</td>
<td>a. Some programs (MDT, Cosmetology, etc., may have different census dates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>payment</td>
<td>1. If student meets eligibility requirements, no balance is due</td>
<td>1. Fee deferment note in student portal until census date</td>
<td>1. Foundation pays Student Finance for tuition/fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Deadline for payment of drop: census date</td>
<td>2. Student Finance bills Foundation for tuition/fees census date and on last day of school each semester (TBD; depends on FAQ dates)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Fees not covered by Promise included in detail code document</td>
<td>3. Bookstore bills foundation for books/supplies at census date and on the 10th of each month following the census date</td>
<td>2. Foundation pays Bookstore for books/supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Foundation sends records to FAQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1. If student is attending full-time, Bookstore will have record of</td>
<td>1. Foundation checks eligibility requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important</td>
<td>student’s name and K-number, and payment will only be due for non-</td>
<td>2. Foundation adopts College appeals processes for this program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasks (getting</td>
<td>essential items (items not required for registered courses)</td>
<td>a. Academic Probation process requires students to enroll in 6+ units and attend a seminar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your student ID</td>
<td>2. Course fees may be noted/recorded at a later date and will be</td>
<td>b. The clear pathway to get off academic probation should be mirrored by the process to remain eligible for the Promise program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>card, buying books,</td>
<td>included in monthly billing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finding housing, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitoring</td>
<td>1. If a student is on probation/does not meet eligibility requirements...</td>
<td>1. Foundation checks eligibility requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Webpage:**
- Eligibility requirements
- FAQs (include info about disqualifications?)
- Commitment form/button (we can embed a Google form and check/update college daily, or use another form and receive automated e-mails as students apply)
- Contact info for questions/concerns (appeals may be on a case-by-case basis)
- Donor recognition and how to give
- Link to SBCC Financial Aid/Scholarships page
- Thank you notes/essays to donors
- Success stories (later)
SBCC Promise Cost Projection per Student

Fall/Spring
$621  enrollment per student per semester ($46/unit x 13.5 units per semester)
$350  for books & supplies each semester
$32   transportation fee each semester
$20   health fee each fall/spring semester
$5    activity sticker each semester
$1    student representation fee each semester
= $1,029 per student per semester**
= $2,058 per student per year**
= $4,116 per student for two years**
**assuming they enroll in 13.5 units per semester and do not enroll in summer courses

Summer I/II
$230  enrollment per student per semester ($46/unit x 5 units per semester)
$150  for books & supplies each semester
$15   transportation fee each semester
$14   health fee each fall/spring semester
$N/A  activity sticker each semester
$1    student representation fee each semester
= $410 per student per summer term
= $820 per student per year
= $1,640 per student for two years

= $2,058 per student per year**
= $4,116 per student for two years**
**assuming they enroll in 13.5 units per semester and do not enroll in summer courses

= $2,468 per student per year**
= $4,936 per student for two years**
**assuming they enroll in 13.5 units per semester and enroll in 5 units in one summer session

= $2,878 per student per year**
= $5,756 per student for two years**
**assuming they enroll in 13.5 units per semester and enroll in 5 units in both summer sessions
### SBCC College Promise

#### Financial Estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Local HS Graduates</th>
<th>% BOG Waivers</th>
<th>Cost/Unit/Student</th>
<th>Cost/Year (2S)</th>
<th>Cost/2 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
<td>$515,200</td>
<td>$1,030,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$19.00</td>
<td>$24,472</td>
<td>$48,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>$38,640</td>
<td>$77,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$6,440</td>
<td>$12,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1,288</td>
<td>$2,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>805</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Local HS Graduates Enrolling at SBCC in Fall by Graduation Year**

- 2011: 843
- 2012: 832
- 2013: 853
- 2014: 735
- 2015: 763

**Projection @ 80% of Cohort**

- Mean: 805
- 644

**Cost/Unit Semester**

- 15

**W/ 66% BOG Waivers**

- $444,360
- $151,082
- $302,165
- $604,330

**Cost/2 Years**

- $46/ unit x 15 units = $690/ semester/ student

*Average cohort 2011-2015 has been 66% BOG Waivers*
Dear ________________,

Thank you for your interest in the SBCC Promise, [and for your many years of support for SBCC’s students programs].

Scholarships and book grants have long been used as tools to allow certain students to better afford higher education. The requirements to access these resources vary widely – based on need, achievement, demographics, or a combination of factors. In the end, a significant number of otherwise well-qualified students are unable to pursue higher education.

The College Promise model, on the other hand, offers a structural solution by raising substantial private funds to ensure that there are resources available for all local students. The very act of our community stepping forward and offering these resources makes a strong statement: all students in our community are valued and that we believe that our community college has something to offer anyone who wishes to make the necessary commitments to take advantage of it.

Over the past decade, privately supported College Promise programs have grown from a single experiment in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 2005 to more than one hundred programs scattered across the United States today. Among California Community Colleges there were just three as of December 2015 – at Ventura College, Long Beach City College, and Cuesta College. In just the past year this has grown to twenty-five, including Santa Barbara City College.

As you are likely aware, Santa Barbara City College was co-winner of the 2013 Aspen (Institute) Prize for Community College Excellence, earning it a #1 national ranking. Accordingly, the SBCC Promise also sets a new national standard as the first College Promise program in the nation to be completely open access to all local graduates, completely privately funded, and offer two full years of support, including tuition, fees, books and supplies. Detailed eligibility standards are attached.

Thanks to the collective efforts of SBCC staff, faculty, and administrators in partnership with the SBCC Foundation and our community of donors, the SBCC Promise has already exceeded even our most optimistic expectations. As of this writing, approximately 730 local students are enrolled in the inaugural cohort of the SBCC Promise.
A great deal of research went into the creation of the SBCC Promise. College promise programs across the country were willing to share their experience, models, and data. As a result, we have been able to design and launch the most ambitious promise program in the nation. Nearly all research on college success over the past few decades suggests that a student’s chance of success in college is strongly correlated with early enrollment, full-time status, and access to academic counseling and support. The SBCC Promise specifically incentivizes each of these.

In the short term, the SBCC Promise aims to transform our region through increased access to higher education with the goals of:

- reducing economic barriers to college for all local students
- increasing persistence rates of SBCC students (help students stay enrolled from semester to semester)
- increasing SBCC student completion rates (help students reach their goals and complete their programs)
- reducing average time to completion (help students get done faster)
- reducing student debt loads

The longer term goal is to change assumptions about college access for all students regardless of family education level, economic status, parental expectations, or high school academic performance. We also expect to demonstrate a positive effect on the local economy as more local youth gain access to the skills and training that SBCC can provide and use those skills in our local workforce.

Between December 2015 and March 2016, the SBCC Foundation had conversations with over 120 community leaders. Among these were philanthropic leaders, corporate leaders and individual donors, all of whom expressed a strong interest in supporting the SBCC Promise.

In order to sustain the SBCC Promise, the SBCC Foundation will need to raise approximately $1 million for the first year (2016-17) and approximately $2 million annually for all future years. The goal is to raise $5 million for the three year start-up period (2016-2019) by the end of the current fiscal year, and then begin the process of building an endowment that will sustain the program in perpetuity.

We have only recently begun asking for specific commitments, but already have $2.5 million in gifts and pledges secured. We hope that you will consider a gift to support the SBCC Promise.

We welcome any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Geoff Green, CEO
SBCC Foundation
El Dorado Promise Scholarship Application Form

Complete this form in entirety to request funding from the El Dorado Promise scholarship program. Please print clearly. See page two for complete instructions on completing this form.

Student: ___________________________ Date: __________

Social Security Number:

Address: ___________________________ City / State / ZIP: ___________________________

Phone #: ___________________________ Alternate Phone #: _________________________

E-mail Address: ________________________

The following is my qualification information:

Grade at which continuous El Dorado Public School (EPS) enrollment began:

This is the date which I expect to graduate from El Dorado High School:

The schools listed below are the schools that I am considering for enrollment and use of the El Dorado Promise Scholarship. (List your choices in order of preference; you are only required to list one.)

School 1: ___________________________

School 2: ___________________________

School 3: ___________________________

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the terms of this scholarship and the information I have provided above concerning residency and enrollment in the El Dorado Public School district is true to the best of my knowledge.

Student (student must sign): ___________________________

Parent / Guardian: ___________________________

(if under 18)

Address: ___________________________

(if different than above)

City / State / ZIP: ___________________________

Phone Number: ___________________________
Application instructions:

1. Fill in the information on your name, address, social security number (required for tax purposes), phone, and e-mail.

2. Fill in the grade at which your continuous El Dorado Public School (EPS) enrollment began.
   a. Enrollment must have started on at the beginning of the year for that grade.
   b. Enrollment must have been in an EPS district school.
   c. See the website (www.eldoradopromise.com) for clarification on this requirement, under frequently asked questions (FAQ) or the Promise Administrator for a paper copy of the same.

3. Fill in your expected high school graduation date (month and year).

4. State college or university(s) to which you have applied or plan to apply. List your choices in order of preference; you are only required to list one. Institutions selected must be accredited by one of the following regional accrediting bodies:
   a. Middle States Commission of Higher Education
   b. New England Association of Schools and Colleges - Commission of Institutions of Higher Education
   c. North Central Association of Colleges and Schools - The Higher Learning Commission
   d. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
   e. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
   f. Western Association of Schools and Colleges

5. Sign the form. If you are not at least 18 years of age, your parent or guardian must ALSO sign and provide their contact information if different from yours. All students must sign.

6. If you have any questions please refer to the website (www.eldoradopromise.com). You may also visit the Promise Administrator at the High School (870-864-5128).

7. Applications may be submitted to your high school counseling office or mail completed application to:

   El Dorado Promise Program Administrator
   2000 Wildcat Drive
   El Dorado, AR 71730
   Phone: 870-864-5128
   Fax: 870-863-3309
Income, academic performance and first generation status are all indicators of success.

Students from lower income households as measured by EFC attend post-secondary in Tennessee at a higher rate yet retain at the lowest rate as shown by Figure 1. (Students from higher income households as measured by EFC are more likely to retain for their second year and ultimately graduate from post-secondary.)

Figure 2 emphasizes the importance of income, family background and past academic performance. Students who are persisting have higher ACT scores, are less likely to be first generation students and are less likely to be eligible for a full Pell grant.

Affecting both access and success in post-secondary, household income directly influences student persistence and completion.

**Students who receive a full Pell grant are less likely to continue.**

33% of students who enroll are fully Pell grant eligible.

60% of full Pell grant students retain fall to fall.

76% of students not receiving a full Pell grant retain.
1. EFC: Estimated Family Contribution; a measure of the ability for a student’s family to contribute to a year of post-secondary costs based on information provided on the FAFSA.
2. Pell grant: a need-based federal grant awarded to students who have not earned a bachelor’s degree and qualify based on household income.
TNACHIEVES IN ACTION
LESSONS LEARNED FROM
TNACHIEVES COMMUNITY TOUR
AND OUR STRATEGIES TO INCREASE COLLEGE COMPLETION

PARENT ENGAGEMENT
Mailing a parent/guardian handbook to the home of all TN Promise applicants

REAL TIME DATA ACCESS
Exploring options (e.g., a mentor and student portal) to give stakeholders timely student-level data
During our community tour, our stakeholders reinforced the importance of student encouragement, particularly focused on the role of the parent/guardian in the decision to pursue college. In an effort to further educate our families about college and its value, tnAchieves will be mailing a parent/guardian handbook to each applicant’s home. By continuing to create innovative programs and implement successful strategies, tnAchieves is actively working to close Tennessee’s post-secondary gaps.

tnAchieves understands that to reach at-risk student populations the program needs to meet them where they are in real time. This involves re-examining how and when we deliver information to our students as well as how well we arm our mentors with student-level data.

Summer melt, or the loss of at-risk students during the summer between high school graduation and college enrollment, is a widespread challenge. Building off the success of the Summer Bridge Program, tnAchieves hopes to partner with the State of Tennessee to expand beyond our 15 current sessions to address summer melt.

With the unique perspective of working in 84 of Tennessee’s 95 counties, tnAchieves plans to begin thoughtfully sharing best practices in hopes of assisting our communities as they seek to overcome challenges keeping students from earning college credentials (e.g., transportation).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Summer Bridge Program opportunities for recent high school graduates</td>
<td>Working with local communities to tackle access challenges (e.g., transportation) by sharing best practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Pittsburgh Promise Evaluation Approach: DESCRIPTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>EXAMPLE INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Monitor PK-12 and postsecondary performance indicators | Promise program; PPS; Funders | Annual descriptive statistics of PPS and Promise data | FAFSA completion  
|                                               |                                 | Trend analyses            | HS graduation  
|                                               |                                 |                          | PSE enrollment patterns  
|                                               |                                 |                          | PSE persistence  
|                                               |                                 |                          | Degree attainment |
| Understand how PPS supports students in postsecondary planning | PPS; Promise program | Qualitative study of high school supports (observation, interview, survey, document review) from counselors, teachers, students | College Board’s 8 components of college and career support  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Tools  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Messages  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Structures  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Resources  |

### The Pittsburgh Promise Evaluation Approach: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>EXAMPLE INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Assess impact of the Promise on college-going outcomes of PPS students | Promise program; PPS; Funders; National research community | Regression discontinuity using eligibility requirements as analytic lever  
|                                               |                                 | Differences in differences | • Seamless college enrollment  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Enrollment patterns: in-state, 4-year college  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Year 1 to Year 2 persistence  
|                                               |                                 |                          | • Degree attainment  |