



**College  
Promise**



**College Promise  
Annual Report 2020 - 2021**

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# Introduction

Prosperity for all, encompassing continuous upward mobility through college, careers, and communities - especially for youth and adults from low-income, high need communities - cannot be accomplished without (1) access to an affordable, quality education beyond high school, and (2) a family-sustaining living wage. These two conditions are foundational for every American to gain the knowledge, skills, education, training, and supports that prepare them for the jobs and communities of today and tomorrow. As our nation overcomes and adjusts to the confluence of pandemics (economic, health-impacted, governmental dysfunction, social justice, and environmental, to name just a few), access to and success through postsecondary education is out of reach for too many Americans.

Six years ago, College Promise launched its national campaign with 53 local Promise programs identified across a few states. Since then, the Promise movement has grown to 348 local and state programs across 47 states. During this period, thirty-three governors and their legislatures have statewide College Promise programs underway for their residents, and the latest analysis shows virtually equal support from both Republicans and Democrats. Further, overwhelmingly, the public wants an education beyond high school to be as universal, free, and available as high school has been since the 20th century.

As a nation, if we genuinely want to build and sustain a college-going culture for all, expanding access to and success in and through postsecondary education depends on not only making but keeping the College Promise for our nation's students and families. A Promise must be kept not only for one cohort of students in one sector (first time freshmen from high school, or adults with little or no college), but for all and for the foreseeable future.

By building programs that are lasting and dependable, Promise leaders are not only impacting students going to college by offering life-changing scholarships and supports to undergird a quality education, but they are also inspiring future generations to aspire to and obtain further education throughout their lives. In the 21st century, continuous education across one's lifetime will be evermore essential to the prosperity of our nation. Working together to build high-impact, financially sustainable College Promise programs, we can make a significant and sustainable impact in educating the next generation and future generations for a stronger, more prosperous country. We believe that if Americans take advantage of quality educational opportunities throughout their lives, they will return dramatic social, economic, and civic gains for our nation, restoring America to its rightful place as a world leader led by our well-prepared citizenry for the challenges ahead.

College Promise is committed to expanding and deepening the College Promise movement by scaling the evidence-based, high-impact Promise models and solutions to spur the talent pipeline, sharing the Promise knowledge gained and lessons learned more broadly, and leveraging research and policy to gain bipartisan support for well-designed, sustainable federal and state legislation proposed in the [College Promise for All](#).

Over the past year, College Promise has worked nonstop to build awareness and support to make college opportunities free for millions of students. We have shown where growth and quality Promise programming yielded Promise solutions and results for replication and scale.. we have

innovated to help local and state Promise leaders integrate multiple funding streams to increase financial sustainability, and are proud that our College Program-Children's Savings Account Integration Initiative has expanded this year.

Through its College Promise Research Network, College Promise continues to spread high-impact local and state Promise models, identifying and promoting exemplary Promise programs for cross-sector leaders to adopt/improve and scale in their communities and regions. Further, College Promise designed innovative pilots that will close equity, achievement, and social justice gaps to maximize college completion and the earning potential of students while crafting plans for their long-term success in the economy, their communities, and the greater society. In October we launched #BecauseWeWill, a national 'student voices campaign,' to incentivize leadership and engagement opportunities for Promise students.

Despite the continued rippling effects of the pandemics, many College Promise programs across the country are demonstrating positive impacts to better serve their students, families, and communities:

- Since its 2016 launch, the [Los Angeles Promise](#) spurred a 24% overall enrollment increase from the Los Angeles Unified School District, with a remarkable 56% increase for full-time LAUSD students in its first 2 years. Following that, from 2017-2020, Promise students' retention and persistence increased by 23% and more than doubled first year completion of English and Math, yielding a 43% increase in 3 year degree and certificate completion, when compared to non-Promise students.
- In 2021, Achieve Atlanta celebrated their second cohort of 617 students graduating from four-year institutions.
- In the 2020-21 academic year, [Pittsburgh Promise](#) served their [10,000th student](#) and distributed their \$150 millionth scholarship award.
- In rural Kansas, [Neodesha Promise](#) covered [75% of Neodesha high school graduates' college tuition and fees with its scholarships, coupled with Pell grants](#).
- In 2020-21, [99,091](#) Washington state students received the College Promise through the [Washington College Grant](#) (WCG).

Promise programs now offer credible evidence for schools, institutions, communities, and states to adopt viable pandemic and post-pandemic recovery strategies to dramatically increase student opportunity and success. Despite the most trying of times for America, the College Promise movement stands as a national proof point that education for all is not only possible but crucial for the future of our nation and our entire democracy. With the continued support and partnership of the American people – our students, families, and public and private sector champions – we are confident that College Promise will advance its leadership and advocacy to transform and sustain higher quality, better-connected education, workforce, government, non-profit, and civic systems to generate prosperity for the world of tomorrow.



Eduardo J. Padrón  
Honorary Chair



The Honorable James Geringer  
Honorary Vice Chair



Martha Kanter  
CEO



# National Advisory Board 2020 - 2021

## Honorary Chair

**Eduardo J. Padrón**

President Emeritus, Miami Dade College

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**The Honorable James “Jim” Geringer**

30<sup>th</sup> Governor of Wyoming (1995 -2003)

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**Robert (Bob) C. Ballard**

President & CEO, Scholarship America

**Randy Boyd**

President, University of Tennessee;  
Founder & Chairman, Radio Systems  
Corporation

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President & CEO, Association of Community  
College Trustees

**Walter G. Bumphus**

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of Community Colleges

**Christopher Cabaldon**

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City of West Sacramento

**Constance Carroll**

President & CEO, California Community  
College Baccalaureate Association;  
Chancellor Emerita, San Diego  
Community College District

**Zheng Yu Huang**

Executive Director, Committee of 100;  
Chairman, Yu Capital

**Martha Kanter**

CEO, College Promise

**Kyle Lierman**

CEO, Civic Nation; When We All Vote, Civic  
Advisors

**Joe May**

Chancellor, Dallas County Community  
College District

**William F. L. Moses**

Managing Director, Education, The Kresge  
Foundation

**Wade Randlett**

CEO, Transportation Fuels Division,  
General Biofuels

**LaVerne Srinivasan**

Vice President, National Program Director,  
Education, Carnegie Corporation of New York

**Karen A. Stout**

President & CEO, Achieving the Dream

**William H. Swanson**

Chairman & CEO (Retired), Raytheon  
Company

**Lynn Tincher-Ladner**

President & CEO, Phi Theta Kappa Honor  
Society

**Nancy Zimpher**

Chancellor Emerita, State University of New  
York; Founder, Strive Together & National  
Association of System Heads



# **Delivering the Promise: Federal Policy Landscape**

## College Promise for All Policy Framework

As America recovers from the far-reaching impacts of COVID and works to overcome the country's tragic history of systemic racism seen bluntly in its structural barriers to educational opportunity and achievement, the College Promise for All is more important than ever before to increase postsecondary attainment, career success, and long-term economic security. College Promise has positioned itself as a leader in national outreach, mobilizing support from high-profile organizations, influencers, policymakers, and the public. Our multi-channel campaign has utilized grassroots support and social media strategies to spotlight, deepen, and spread the College Promise conversation and the imperative to address and curb college inequities, costs, and access barriers. To do this, College Promise has engaged stakeholders — Promise leaders, policymakers, higher education institutions, researchers, and students — through petitions, targeted letters, and social media advocacy, tracking engagement progress on a monthly basis.

Delivering on the goal of College Promise for All requires that our team focuses on college access, affordability, quality, and completion for every hardworking youth and adult, with continuous reflection and evaluation on our opportunities, challenges, and results to remain accountable for our work. Innovation makes an impact only if the solution is truly empowering those it serves. Consistent step-backs and internal evaluations keep us centered on objectives, but also allow us to course-correct as needed. We have partnered with leading researchers from the University of Alabama's Education Policy Center, to analyze how [to reimagine, stabilize and align Pell Grants](#), with local and statewide Promise programs. We also recognize that this is a key moment to impact federal and state legislation to improve the economic, social, and civic outcomes for the many disenfranchised Americans with talent who can and will benefit from an education beyond high school if given the opportunity. Having grown the College Promise movement with widespread bipartisan supporters since 2015, it is now time to scale and expand College Promise programs in partnership with local, state, and federal leaders. The joint CPFA statement represents the signatories' commitment to work together in taking transformational steps forward to increase College Promise opportunities for every American, thereby reducing - or eliminating altogether - the inequities and declines in college and career access and success that have long impeded our nation's economic and social prosperity.



### COLLEGE PROMISE FOR ALL

*Preparing America's Talent Pipeline with Universal Access to, through, and beyond Postsecondary Education*

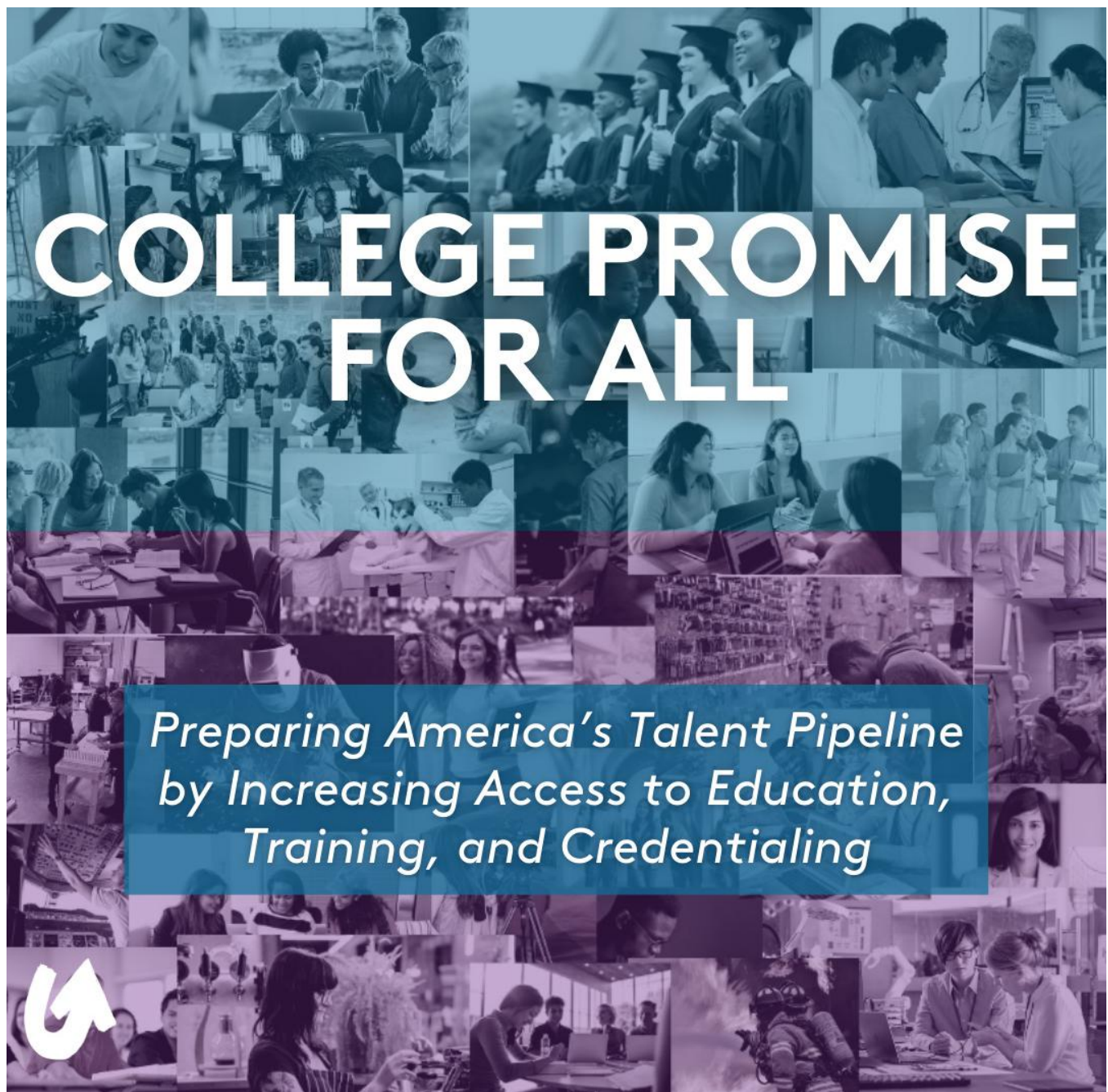
*A Federal-State Partnership Proposal for College Promise*

APRIL 16, 2021 // BY MARTHA KANTER, ROSY BLANCAS CLOUD, AND DANIELLE LAZAROWITZ



## Commitment Statement & Stakeholder Engagement

Earlier this year, College Promise released [College Promise for All](#), outlining the policy framework for a Federal-State Partnership to create a national, stable, and sustainable Promise program funding stream. “By expanding access to college with a national Promise program, postsecondary education and the entire nation can work towards not just recovering from the pandemic, but coming back stronger than ever,” said Eduardo Padrón, Chair of the National Advisory Board for College Promise. Over Eighty national, state, and local partners, institutions and organizations have signed the College Promise for All (CPFA) commitment statement. To read the commitment statement, view the full list of partners, and join the CPFA movement visit [www.collegepromise.org/collegepromiseforall](http://www.collegepromise.org/collegepromiseforall).







# 2020-2021 Projects & Initiatives



## Preparing the Next Generation of Workers

As an organization, College Promise strives to improve access to opportunity and economic mobility by removing barriers to postsecondary education. Various policy briefs published by College Promise this year covered the crucial educational and workforce needs of students from [Minority Serving Institutions and HBCUs](#) as well as [equitable program design](#) features. Access to educational opportunities is only half the battle, and educational opportunities can benefit from aligning with career and workforce needs to truly create a pathway to a better quality of life. The College Promise movement is more than free tuition; it promotes incorporating robust student supports, from birth through adulthood, to ensure that students persist to, through, and beyond college, and - either simultaneously or sequentially - that our nation's workers obtain the education and training they need for productive careers and increased community engagement that stimulates and sustains prosperous communities. College Promise believes that the continued inclusion of workforce development in our mission is critical as our society mitigates the extraordinary challenges facing our nation's students and workers.

Over the past year, College Promise has continued to expand its efforts focused on elevating the role of postsecondary education in addressing workforce and economic development needs. Leveraging its existing knowledge, understanding, and relationships, College Promise is working with Promise programs to further expand and better target their supports and services to broader cohorts of students and learners. With a goal of promoting greater and more immediate economic mobility across the country, College Promise has continued to promote these expansive Promise programs through webinars, reports, blogs, social media, and the Careers Institute.

## College Promise Careers Institute

Now more than ever, America has the opportunity to rebuild our education, training, and workforce infrastructures to address the challenges faced by workers. Exacerbated by a global pandemic, it is critical that we reimagine the systems in place and innovate towards a more inclusive and just workforce.

On November 16, 17, and 18, 2020, with generous support from Ascendium Education Group, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and The Kresge Foundation, College Promise hosted the first annual Careers Institute, a 3-day summit that convened an audience of over 1,000 of our nation's trailblazers — large corporate and small/medium-sized business employers, academic & policy researchers, workforce development commissioners and practitioners, state and local government, funders, education practitioners, Promise leaders, students, and emerging leaders — to tackle the most complex challenges American workers face, from the role of artificial intelligence to the increasing importance of soft skills. It featured 50 panelists and 24 sessions throughout the symposium, including [opening remarks from First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden](#) immediately following the Presidential election. Other notable speakers included Jamie Merisotis, President & CEO, Lumina Foundation; Maria Flynn, President, Jobs for the Future; Matt Sigelman, CEO, Burning Glass Technologies; Jake Hirsch-Allen, North America Workforce Development, and Higher Ed System Lead, LinkedIn; Vinice Davis, Venture Partner, Imaginable Futures; Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School; Maryann Rainey, Program Officer, Streamline Key Learner Transitions, Ascendium

Education Group; Beth Cobert, Chief Operating Officer, Markle Foundation & Chief Executive Officer, Skillful; Chike Aguh, Head of Economic Mobility Micro-Pathways, Education Design Lab; and many others.

A second annual [Careers Institute](#) will take place November 16 and 17, 2021, and will focus on key transitions between education and the workforce, including college pathways, accelerated learning programs, on-the-job training models, career exploration, and job placement innovations. The 2-day virtual event will feature live, and pre-recorded panels and interactive sessions focused on various subjects, including policy, Promise program key features, degree and non-degree programs leading to competitive employment, and adult learners seeking in-demand careers.





# Innovative Tools for Advancing Equity

## MyPromise Tool

Thanks to generous initial funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Kresge Foundation, College Promise has created a student-centric MyPromise digital tool that enables students, parents, guidance counselors, and advisors to search and filter a database of all Promise programs to identify program matches for individual students. We intend to create an integrated view of all College Promise programs that scales as College Promise For All expands.

## Value Impact Profile (VIP) Tool

In response to the increased and shifting needs of programs, College Promise is committed to increasing local and state Promise quality and financial sustainability through ongoing program data collection and the development of the Value Impact Profile. Through this next phase of development, College Promise will work to customize the interactive tool to integrate program data and evaluate individual Promise programs. By utilizing this tool, Promise programs will be able to assess the current impact and effectiveness of their individual program in relation to other comparable programs and encourage continuous program improvement. College Promise will continue to promote and drive Promise program improvement by building out the Value Impact Profile and sharing financial sustainability best practices and resources. In addition, we plan to build out a training sequence for our tools and programming to prepare and support practitioners nationwide.

## #BecauseWeWill Student Voices Campaign



In Spring of 2021, College Promise soft-launched the #BecauseWeWill Campaign, an interactive social media campaign designed to give learners an opportunity to share personal stories and build a sense of community, support, and belonging with other learners across the country. In addition to College Promise for All, the campaign focuses on college enrollment, persistence, employment, civic engagement, and non-traditional experiences (on-the-job training, volunteerism, paid internships, etc.). Learners are also invited to serve as initiative ambassadors to further engage their peers and other stakeholders about their unique needs and the critical importance of getting to and through college, to successful careers. Given College Promise's strong partnerships with Promise partners, asking their input on how to invest their communities in this campaign is key and helps us stay engaged on a local level. College Promise has secured partnerships with Phi Theta Kappa and The Kresge Foundation, to support the expansion of the student video competitions to reach more students. As of Fall 2021, the campaign has scaled nationally and is now entering a multi-year cycle. Our goal is to run a monthly award competition wherein students are awarded \$1,000 prizes each month.





# Building a National College Promise Community



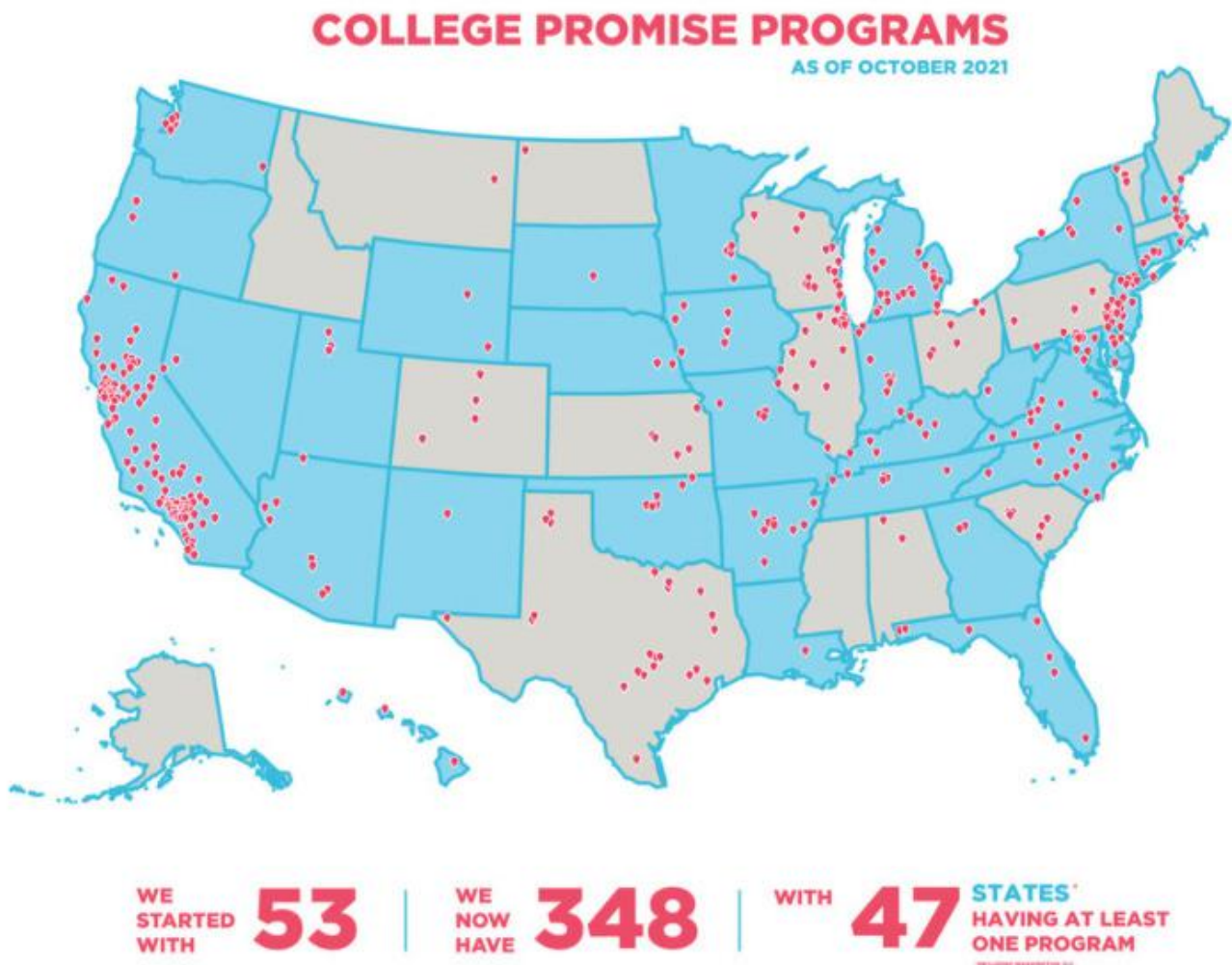
## 2021 College Promise Catalog

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, College Promise released its newly updated [catalog](#) of nationwide Promise programs. This year, remarkable growth and sustainability have continued in communities and states across the country as Promise leaders from education, business, government, nonprofits, labor, and philanthropy deliver on their commitments to make and keep a college education universal, freely available, and accessible for our nation's students.

High-level details include:

- There are 348 programs tracked in this catalog. 292 of those programs are implemented and funded at the local level while there are 56 programs implemented and funded at the state level.
- 33 states plus Washington, DC have a statewide Promise program. While most states have local programs, only three states have no Promise footprint: Alaska, Idaho, and Mississippi.
- California has the largest number of Promise programs and Michigan ranks second.

We continuously update our [catalog](#) to include edits and feedback from our Promise partners.



## The Rural College Promise Network

Current economic forecasts predict that 80% of jobs providing a living wage require some postsecondary training. Unfortunately, less than 30% of adults in rural communities and small towns hold a bachelor's or associate's degree. According to [rootED Alliance](#), 32% of high school students live in rural communities and small towns. Yet, only 34% of rural young adults are enrolled in postsecondary education. [Student Success Scholars from the University of Massachusetts Amherst](#) notes that rural postsecondary students that do attend have lower persistence and completion rates than their urban and suburban counterparts.

College Promise programs linked to the unique needs of rural communities have never been more critical. While there is no specific roadmap to success, our rural colleagues throughout the nation have created innovative programming to meet local needs. The power of these programs can be amplified by bringing rural College Promise leaders together to respond to the current realities, design best practices, and create a collective voice for rural access and attainment. Expanding the Rural College Promise Network will create a community of practice for college practitioners seeking to expand opportunities to students from rural areas through College Promise programs. Rural community colleges are particularly impactful as they help build meaningful pathways for students within communities that are often otherwise disconnected from resources and opportunities. On April 19, 2021, First Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden and Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, with Illinois Governor J. B. Pritzker and College Promise CEO Martha Kanter, visited Sauk Valley Community College (SVCC) in Dixon, Illinois. After a tour of the campus, Dr. Biden and Secretary Cardona gave short addresses reaffirming the value of community colleges as important drivers of economic mobility and growth for both students and entire communities, especially in America's rural communities. [As Dr. Biden noted in her speech](#), community colleges are invaluable for "meeting students where they are," offering low-cost education and training to students from all walks of life.

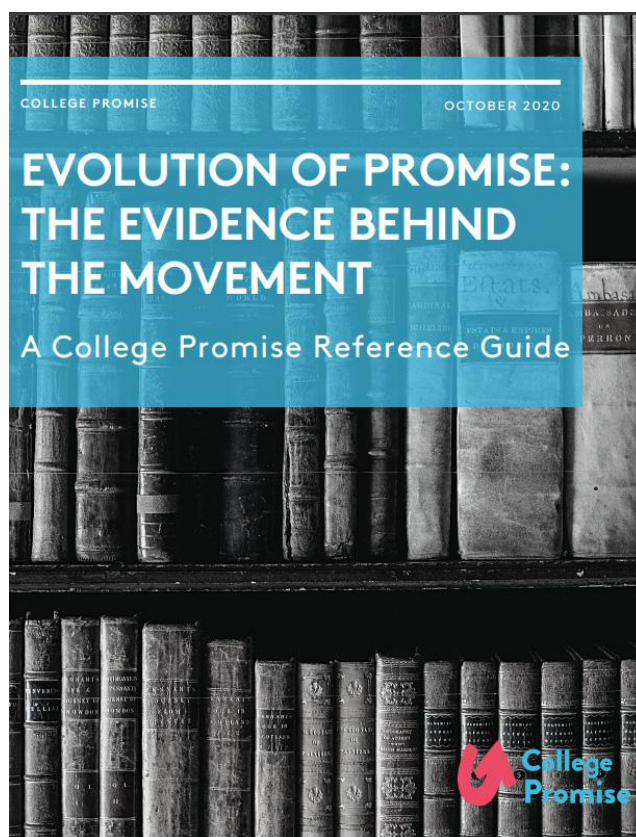


## College Promise Research Network (CPRN)

The pursuit of evidence-based best practices for Promise programs has always been a core focus of College Promise's work, and we have been fortunate to collaborate with some of the best researchers in the field to ensure that the voice of the academic community is represented well in the movement. Launched in 2019, the College Promise Research Network is composed of Promise researchers and evaluators, educational and workforce economists, state and federal financial aid experts, and program administrators with experience in research, policy, assessment, and evaluation. Partner organizations represented include the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, MDRC, WestEd, University of Pennsylvania's Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, Columbia University's Teacher College Community College Research Center, and Georgetown University's Center for Education and the Workforce, to name a few. This unique and diverse set of scholars support the national College Promise movement by identifying, producing, and promoting high-quality research and evidence that:

- Makes a sound case for the need for College Promise programs
- Identifies research-based practices and program design features that promote access, persistence, and completion — especially for students from groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education
- Guides programs in evaluating program participation and outcomes
- Makes research accessible and valuable to practitioners, policymakers, and other College Promise stakeholders, including a wider network of emerging Promise leaders

Over the past two years, College Promise has convened, supported, and collaborated with the College Promise Research Network to identify literature that can inform the design, implementation, and improvement of Promise programs. In the fall of 2020, this literature was compiled to create a reference guide, [Evolution of Promise: The Evidence Behind the Movement](#), which includes blogs, books, conference papers, databases, dissertations, journal articles (peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed), policy position papers (reports), research reports, and web documents. Our hope is that the literature collected here will be used to help inform the development and continual improvement of Promise programs around the country, as well as help identify gaps in the research to spur new evaluations, meta-analyses, and replications.





## College Promise-Children's Savings Account Integration Project



Community and statewide savings initiatives, frequently referred to as Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs), Child Development Accounts (CDAs), or 529s, offer families a clear entry point into the financial system. And while many of these accounts start small, their sheer existence can ignite important family conversations about finances, college planning, and career goals, especially for families from low-income communities. Integrating this long-term savings strategy with a long-term education College Promise investment helps to build economic security, a college-going culture within families and their communities, and removes economic barriers to postsecondary education and the workforce. By shaping expectations and achievements, Promise programs integrated with CSAs are a gateway to further education and economic mobility.

Over the past year, with the continued support of The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, College Promise has worked thoughtfully and collaboratively with its partners, Prosperity Now and the National League of Cities, and the Promise-CSA Peer Learning Community to build momentum and drive greater alignment across the Promise and CSA fields. In support of these efforts, College Promise has worked to enhance and sustain the growing movement through:

- **Fostering the Growth of the CP-CSA Peer Learning Network** | At the beginning of this integration initiative in 2017, College Promise established a group of communities across the US interested in learning and sharing knowledge around best practices and lessons learned, specifically around Children's Savings Accounts and Promise programs. As part of this network, participants

have exclusive access to shared learning experiences including resources, virtual events, and targeted discussions with peers, community leaders, and other experts from the field. As of Fall 2021, the Peer Learning Network includes over 40 participating communities from across the country.


- ***The Launch of Bi-Monthly CP-CSA Peer Learning Network Engagement Meetings*** | In an effort to further promote best practices, learnings, and news across the Promise and CSA fields, College Promise launched a bi-monthly series of peer learning calls. During these interactive meetings, communities working toward or interested in Promise-CSA integration share news about their initiatives, efforts toward integration, as well as recent successes and challenges. College Promise, its partners, and field experts share updates on new initiatives, research, policy, and more. The goal of these forums is to provide a productive space for networking and shared learning. For information, please contact our CP-CSA Project Director, Michelle Cooper at [michelle@collegepromise.org](mailto:michelle@collegepromise.org)

## Highlights:

- College Promise partnered with Dr. William Elliott, III and Sophia Nielsen from the University of Michigan on a policy brief, [Reimagining College Promise Programs: A Wealth Perspective](#).
- Dr. Kanter gave an interview to *Yahoo! Finance*, [Obama-era official: 'We've got to work on college for all'](#), discussing the potentially federal-state opportunities to address the student debt crisis.
- The State of New Jersey partnered with College Promise on [a blog](#) focused on NJ's commitment to greater college affordability, including \$10 million for State grants to taxpayers with incomes up to \$75,000 to match individual contributions to open a new NJBEST 529 college savings account.







# Advancing the College Promise Network



As College Promise continues to drive the national dialogue around free college for all, starting in America's community colleges, a new innovative partnership with The Kresge Foundation will help build crucial evidence to support structural, sustainable reforms and investments at the local, state, and federal levels. The CoPro 2.0 grants

will further the College Promise for All movement. College Promise, as a managing partner, contributes by planning and implementing grantee convenings, publishing summative reports and briefs, and communicating findings with the grantee cohort, stakeholders, and the public through social media, press releases, and blogs

## Program spotlight

### HOPE Toledo



HOPE Toledo Promise is the first comprehensive two-generation college promise program of its kind in the United States. This program provides cost-free postsecondary education for 4.5 years (including tuition, room, board, books, and fees) to high school graduates ("youth scholars") and one of their parents/guardians ("parent scholars") in Toledo, Ohio. HOPE Toledo Promise began with the 2020 graduating class of Jesup W. Scott High School in Toledo where students are among the most underestimated and disadvantaged within the district. Students come from predominantly low-income families and most identify as Black. Further, students' academic and test scores are some of the lowest districtwide. At present, the HOPE Toledo Promise program involves 62 youth scholars from the 2020 Scott High School graduating class and 55 youth from the 2021 graduating class. Approximately 30 parent scholars are currently or soon to be involved. Additional program features include (a) a family-focused program structure where all students from the same high school meet monthly with HOPE Toledo's leadership and their parents; (b) individual and group mentorship and advice from program leadership and partners; and (c) enhanced and coordinated mentorship and academic/career advisement from partnering postsecondary institutions.

## Promise Student Ecosystems of Support

To best support all students and increase equitable access to education, we need to know our students better. And then, we need to design our programs with their needs in mind.

The domains of education, workforce, social service, health, and finance intersect to shape how students get to, through, and beyond college. A deeper understanding of targeted segments of today's post-secondary student population can improve outcomes for students in College Promise programs.

Since 2018, in partnership with ETS, we have brought together innovative, cross-sector research teams to study and report how to best support uniquely challenged student populations. This research examines the “ecosystems” of support needed for various Promise populations and has thus far had two “phases”:

- 1) Youth to college, adult learners, military-connected/veterans, DREAMERs, and justice impacted;
- 2) Foster youth, students with disabilities, academically underprepared students, first generation, and student parents.

College Promise and ETS meet bi-monthly to coordinate the teams of scholars that study each population, support the writing of papers on findings, and partner with all promotional efforts for final publications, including the hosting of a symposium and webinars to inform stakeholders.

On June 2 and 9, 2021, College Promise and ETS co-hosted the **Expanding Promise Symposium**, a national event bringing together students, researchers, and practitioners to review and discuss scholarly insights pertaining to wrap-around supports for five key student populations: **first-generation**, **youth in or aged-out of foster care**, **students with disabilities**, **parents**, and **students needing academic support**. Speakers included Dr. Michael Nettles, from ETS, Dr. Constance Carroll, former Chancellor of San Diego Community College District, and former Tennessee Governor, The Honorable William Haslam.





## Program Spotlight

### Lansing Promise



The Lansing Promise is a scholarship program offering tuition assistance for post-secondary (college or skilled trade) education to all eligible high school graduates within the Lansing School District boundaries. The Promise provides tuition assistance for up to 65 credits at Lansing Community College or the equivalent dollar amount toward tuition and fees at Michigan State University or Olivet College. Since 2012, funds from community-minded donors and socially-minded investors have made the future of Lansing brighter, by giving the hope of an education and career to students who may not have otherwise set foot in a college classroom or certification program. Because of this groundswell of community support, our students are able to explore their dreams, change the trajectory of their lives, and ultimately become the leaders of the future.

## Financial Sustainability

Achieving financial sustainability is a critical goal for Promise programs. In the summer of 2021, College Promise released its new report about the urgent challenges impacting local and statewide College Promise programs and the solutions they are pursuing to achieve financial sustainability. [Navigating Through and Beyond COVID](#) details the threats and opportunities Promise programs face, and the adaptations they've made, to mitigate the deleterious effects of the pandemic for their students. College Promise has published its findings and recommendations after surveying and interviewing hundreds of Promise leaders from across the country to understand and disseminate how they have adapted their programs, services, and systems during COVID.





**From Dream to Reality:  
Speaking Engagements,  
Student Video  
Campaigns, Digital  
Communications**



## Events - Year in Review



Continues next page

# Events - Year in Review (Page 2)



## Publications

- 2020 Annual Report
- College Promise for All Policy Framework
- Depicting the Ecosystems of Support and Financial Sustainability for Five College Promise Populations
- Evolution of Promise: The Evidence Behind the Movement
- A College Promise Reference Guide
- Fall 2021 Promise Program Catalog

### Promise Program Leader:

“...how do we keep moving and how do we keep scaling [Promise] for the whole country? How do we make sure that [students and learners] get, not just a job, but a springboard job, a job that allows them an opportunity for growth and for a way to progress? It might mean additional training, but they might have good benefits and they can have a family serving job, a job that really can support their family.”

— Bill Moses, Managing Director at Kresge Foundation, Careers Institute 2020





## Conclusion: The Future of Promise

Coming out of another pandemic year, an essential truth about America's infrastructure has been magnified because of this strife: education, at every level, matters. As local, state, and federal leaders continue their efforts to increase and sustain funding for postsecondary education, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment for leaders across all communities and states to capitalize on this momentum. The promise of a quality, freely available college education has transformational potential, an opportunity that should be granted to every aspiring American. Building reliable and sustainable College Promise programs students can confidently depend on and navigate is essential for a prosperous America. Tailoring programs and services to best promote student success while expanding the access and stability of Promise with national support, will enable postsecondary education and the entire nation to work toward not just recovering from the pandemic, but coming back stronger than ever.



## 2020-21 Philanthropic Support

As we complete our sixth year and look ahead to the future, we are grateful to have the invaluable support of our philanthropic donors and partners. Our supporters are united in their commitment to enable thousands more hardworking Americans to persist to, through, and beyond college.



Ascendium  
Education Group



Carnegie Corporation  
of New York



The Kresge  
Foundation



The Charles Stewart  
Mott Foundation



ECMC Foundation



Imaginable Futures



Phi Theta Kappa



Proteus Fund

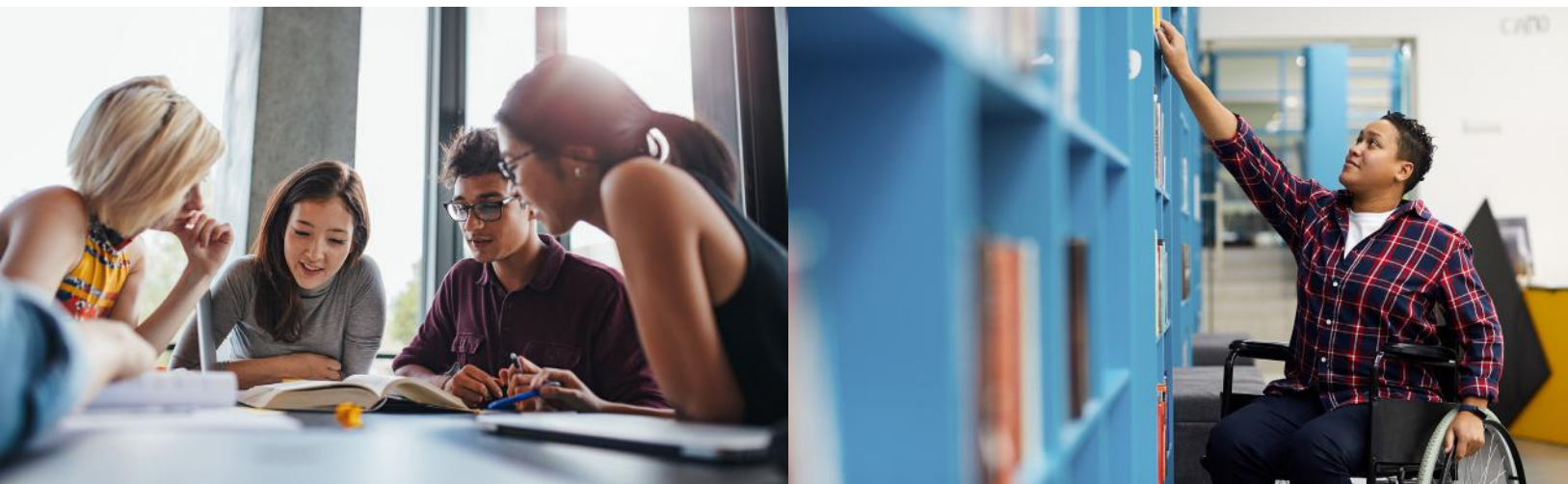
### College Promise Leadership Circle

In 2020-21, College Promise launched the [College Promise Leadership Circle](#). Leadership Circle members play a critical role in advancing the mission of College Promise through gifts and personal support that help create and expand postsecondary opportunities for students, families, and communities. There are several ways to [join the Leadership Circle](#), including through one-time and recurring donations, company matching gifts, and estate plans. College Promise welcomes contributions made through Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, designated for the College Promise Center. We are grateful to our donors for their generosity and commitment to our work.

**DONATE**

College should be as tuition and barrier-free as possible for every hard working student.

Your tax-deductible contribution will help achieve this goal and continue growing the College Promise movement throughout the nation.



☎ 202.569.3000

✉ [info@collegepromise.org](mailto:info@collegepromise.org)

🌐 [www.collegepromise.org](http://www.collegepromise.org)

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