



College Promise: History and Program Design

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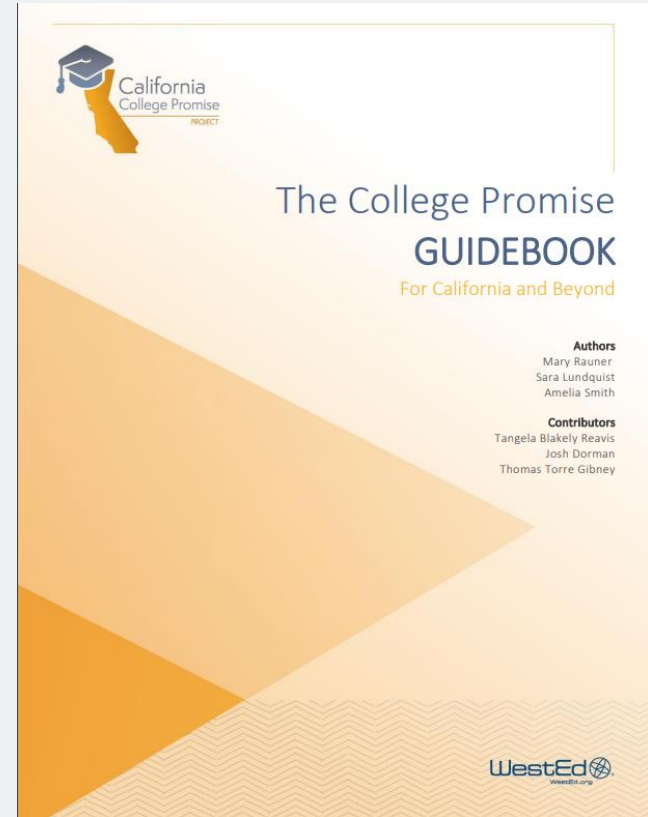
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College Promise Project at WestEd



Six years of:

- Research and evaluation
- Professional development
- Technical assistance



Overview



- Definition of College Promise
- Postsecondary Education Demand and Barriers
- History and Current Status
- Characteristics and Features

What is College Promise?

College Promise programs incentivize college enrollment, persistence, and completion by offering financial, academic, and other support services to students based on where they live or where they attend school.

Why College Promise?

- **65% of all jobs require at least 2 years of postsecondary education or training**
- **Achieve60AZ**
- **College graduates:**
 - More likely to be employed
 - Improved health
 - Significantly less likely to be incarcerated
 - Contributes to local, state, and federal economies

Barriers to Access and Completion

- **Increasing cost of higher education:** Over 10 years:
 - Cost of living increased 45%
 - Income declined 7%
- **Growing economic and racial inequities**
 - Increase in share of college students who attend 2-year institutions
 - Lower rates of overall access and completion
 - 27% in 1970, to 33% in 2015
 - Especially for low-income students/ students of color

Impact of Pandemic and Recession

- **Enrollment decreased**

- All undergraduate enrollment: 4% all institutions; 10% 2-year colleges
- First-year enrollment: 13 %
- Mostly low-income students, students of color

- **College plans changed**

- 75% of students changed plans:
 - 39% continued plans in different format (higher-income students)
 - 37% cancelled plans (mainly certificate or associates degrees, low-income & students of color)

Growth of College Promise

- **Started in early 2000s**
 - Steady growth for 15 years
- **2015**
 - America's College Promise (SOTU 2015)
 - College Promise Campaign
 - High visibility statewide (*Tennessee, Oregon, and Minnesota*), and local (*Kalamazoo, Long Beach*) programs

Current Status

- **Today**
 - ~400 programs across the country
 - Most are local, ~ 30 are state-level programs
 - California: State support for local community college programs
- **America's College Promise legislation**
 - Federal-state partnership for students from low-income families

Program Landscape

- **Wide range of designs**
- **Bi-partisan**
- **Supported by:**
 - colleges, universities, cities, foundations, private corporations, local/state governments
- **Majority: local community college programs**
- **Increasing number of state programs**
- **Growing research base**

Characteristics and Features

- **Cross-sector partnerships**
- **Student eligibility, participation, and continuation requirements**
 - Need, Merit, other
 - Traditional age/Adult
 - Enrollment level (PT/FT)
- **Program benefits**
 - Financial support
 - Academic support & student services
- **Communication**

Collaborate Across Sectors

- **Partner with K-12, CC, 4-year institutions, business, and government**
- **Identify shared goals**
- **Collaborate early (*But it's never too late!*)**

Design Program to Meet Shared Goals

- **Use data to determine impact of eligibility, participation, and continuation requirements**
 - Is the design equity-centered?
 - Will your target populations be excluded?
 - Will the requirements be cumbersome for students and program administrators?
- **Regularly evaluate and improve design**

Consider Incorporating Financial, Academic & Student Services Support



Financial Support

- Tuition
- Fees
- Books & Materials
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Housing
- Food
- Stipends

Academic Support

- **High School**
 - Tutoring
 - Mentoring
 - FAFSA & College Application support
 - Summer academic programs
- **College**
 - Tutoring
 - Workshops
 - Learning communities
 - Group study sessions
 - Early alert feedback

Student Services

- **High School**
 - Transition to college programs
 - Career counseling
 - Campus visits
- **College**
 - First year seminars/cohort programs
 - Coaching
 - Counseling
 - Advising
 - Peer mentoring
 - Workshops

Communicate to Students, Families, and Communities



- **Communicate program components and eligibility requirements**
- **Message clearly, early, and often**
- **Use multiple communication modalities**

Develop a Sustainable Financial Plan

- **Financial plan should withstand political and economic shifts.**
 - Identify diverse funding sources
 - Design a program you can afford (*pilot program*)
 - Build an endowment
 - Ensure you can keep your Promise



A group of graduates in black gowns and caps on a red carpet. In the foreground, a woman with long brown hair is clapping and smiling. To her right, a man with dark hair is also smiling and clapping. They are surrounded by other graduates in the background.

Thank you!

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