

Breaking Down Barriers to Access in Higher Education

Perspectives for Regional and State College Promise Stakeholders and Policy Makers

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1. INTRODUCTION

College Programs across the nation represent the outcomes of pivotal partnerships between local, K-12 school districts, community colleges, public universities, and communities that address the challenge of higher education access and affordability across 49 statesⁱ as of March 2019.

Key Barriers and/or Needs for Access to Completionⁱⁱ

- ✓ Health
- ✓ Unemployment Rates
- ✓ Welfare Participation
- ✓ Quality of Life
- ✓ Financial Barriers
- ✓ Student Debt

Key Finding: Holistic support is needed to move beyond access toward on-time completion and workforce future-ready^{xvi, xix}

2. DATA COLLECTION

Adapted qualitative meta-analysis^{xx} approach to focus on existing literature and evidence-based reports.

Initial Exploration of Statewide and Place-based Models



Tennessee Promise^{iv}

Oregon Promise (Senate Bill 18)^v



New York Excelsior Scholarship^{vi}

Michigan: Local place-based Kalamazoo Promise^{viii, ix, x}



California College Promise (Assembly Bill 19)^{xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv}

Note: This working paper from fall of 2018 initially focused on a sample size of 4 statewide programs and looked at local place-based programs such as Kalamazoo Promise. As of December, 2018 there were 44 College Promise programs around the country—with 23 statewide (Kanter, 2018) which includes states, such as Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Washington, and pilots in Minnesota and Nevada (Mishory, 2018). As of March, 2019, there are approximately 414 college promise programs across 50 states, including Washington DC (Perna & Leigh).^{xxi}

3. FINDINGS

- Programmatic differences
- Ongoing debate and discussions on First Dollar or Last Dollar Programs

Table 1: Promise Program Comparison-History and Funding. Source retrieved on October, 2018. Most current history and funding can be found in the database of college promise programs (Perna & Leigh).^{xxi}

Start Date	Tennessee Promise* 2014	Oregon Promise** 2015	New York/Excelsior*** 2017	California Promise**** 2018
Coverage	Covers the cost of tuition and fees not covered by the federal Pell grant. Doesn't cover costs that are already addressed by the HOPE scholarship or the Tennessee Student Assistance Award.	Maximum grant covers actual cost of full-time community college tuition (~\$4,900). Grant reduced by any state/federal grant aid received down to minimum of \$1k annual grant for full-time study.	SUNY and CUNY two-year and four-year programs on a last dollar basis.	Cover the cost of tuition and college fees including textbooks, transportation, food, and housing.
Source	Funded through a \$300M endowment (repurposed lottery proceeds & state general funding).	\$10M appropriated for the program for the 2016-17 academic year to cover cost of waivers and admin costs.	\$8M to provide open educational resources, including e-books, to help defray costs of textbooks.	California's 2018-19 budget includes \$46M to support the implementation of California Promise.
Restrictions	No Restrictions.	Financial means test added disqualifying higher income families (~\$100,000).	Tuition aid phased over time (families making \$100k in 2017, \$110k in 2018, & \$125k in 2019).	No restrictions.

* TN Uses First-dollar and Last-dollar community college programs. As of March, 2019, Tennessee has 1 place-based program.
 ** OR generally uses Middle-dollar and/or Last-dollar programs. As of March, 2019, Oregon has no place-based programs.
 *** NY generally uses First-dollar and/or Last-dollar programs. As of March, 2019, New York has 2 place-based programs.
 **** CA generally uses First-dollar, Middle-dollar, Last-dollar and/or no award programs. As of March, 2019, California has 5 place-based programs.

Table 2: Promise Program Comparison-Residency & Eligibility. Source retrieved on October, 2018. Most current residency and eligibility can be found in the database of college promise programs (Perna & Leigh).^{xxi}

	Tennessee Promise	Oregon Promise	New York/Excelsior	California Promise
Residency	Tennessee resident.	Minimum 12 months as Oregon resident.	NY resident. Must also reside in NY for one year prior to the term in which scholarship is sought.	California resident.
Qualifications	Graduate from eligible Tennessee HS or home school program or obtain GED or HISET diploma before age 19.	Recent Oregon HS graduate, homeschool or GED recipient.	HS, GED, or federally-approved "Ability to Benefit."	First-time, full-time student.
GPA	Satisfactory academic progress (2.0+ GPA).	2.5+ (HS GPA) or 145+ (GED score).	Maintain GPA necessary for successful completion of coursework.	Maintain GPA of at least 2.0.
Status	Maintain full-time (12+ hours) enrollment during Fall & Spring semesters.	Enroll ½ time + within 6 months of graduation/ GED completion.	Enroll full-time each semester (~30 credits/yr).	Maintain full-time (12 or more units) during each term of the academic year.
Limitations	Five semester limit.	No more than 90 college credits attempted/ completed.	US citizenship. Students must plan to live/work in NY following graduation for length of scholarship.	One academic year only. If start mid academic year, remainder of year only.
Stipulations	Must file for FAFSA by January 17 each year.	Must complete FAFSA or ORSAA application.	Must file for FAFSA and TAP applications.	First academic year.

4. CONCLUSION

- 1 The dynamics underlying longstanding efforts of breaking down barriers to access in higher education through the lens of local stakeholders is evidently essential. However, more so is the importance of taking a holistic approach from beyond access toward completion.
- 2 As promise programs continue to grow in local communities and states as a means to increase access, research must also continue to be conducted to validate the efforts of legislators and educational leaders that are advocating for the creation, expansion, and funding of promise programs as a means to increase college access.
- 3 Continued advocacy for the expansion of Pell dollars.
- 4 Various policy mechanisms for implementing promise programs—local, state and national levels.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- From access to completion initiatives and contiguous enrollment.^{xvi}
- Wrap-around services integral: Inception, impact and efficacies.^{xvi}
- National reforms and sustainable policies in education around the world.^{xvii}
- Disparities in education: Urban-rural-remote location and other dimensions still run deep. More investments in education infrastructure are required.^{xvi}
- Huge data gaps to capture efficacies, efficiencies, impact, and evidence-based research.^{xix, xviii}
- Partnership framework incubations: Private sector, policy-makers and experts—cross-sector and cross-industries must all be involved.^{xvi, xix}
- Future-ready workforce considerations in light of the fourth industrial revolution^{xix, xvi}



6. CITATIONS

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