Making Public Colleges Tuition Free

A BRIEFING BOOK FOR STATE LEADERS

Campaign for Free College Tuition

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Introduction

America's future prosperity and its citizens' access to opportunity depend on increasing educational opportunities beyond high school for all students. Public education has always been principally a joint state-community effort. Once again, states led by visionary Governors and community leaders are responding to the need to expand public education for their residents. The case for public action is clear as communities struggle to position their workforce to compete successfully in an increasingly demanding and global marketplace.

States and communities with the highest levels of educational attainment are the places that are winning in this competitive global economy. Business climate matters, but the percentage of a state's workforce with a college degree or occupational certificate matters most.

This document describes programs at the state level that are removing cost as a barrier to post-secondary education. Although there are many alternative approaches to improving affordability, they offer, at best, a piecemeal solution. Providing tuition free opportunities at public colleges and universities is far superior than the typical hodgepodge of aid packages and loans cobbled together by many students. It is easily understood by students and their families, it provides certainty, and it builds on the nation's history of providing free public education.

The challenge is to move a state's level of educational attainment up and to make sure that every person who is willing to work hard and get good grades has equal access to post-secondary degrees, regardless of family income.

The path to providing free tuition is challenging but we've faced similar challenges in our history. The need for a literate citizenry in the new Republic led to free universal primary education by the time of the Civil War The rapid industrialization of America in the late 19th and early 20th century made the creation of free secondary education a necessity by the end of World War I. This expansion of educational opportunity occurred state-by-state and community-by-community. Recognizing the path to our country's success in a knowledge age of global competition, state and community leaders across the country are once again stepping up to the challenge of expanding free public education to assure economic growth and individual opportunity for their residents.

Some examples of state action show that offering free college tuition is possible and broadly supported where it has been implemented.

- Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam, a Republican, was the first to make community college tuition free in a state. The result has been a sharp increase in the number of Tennessee high school graduates entering college, and strong public support for the program.
- Oregon, with leadership from a Democratic State Senator, has followed suit. Kentucky is expected to implement a similar program for the 2017-2018 school year.
- Michigan, and more recently California, have enacted laws that incent local free tuition programs, with legislative proposals surfacing in a number of other states.

Further evidence that free college tuition is inevitable is the level of public support for the idea. *Polling conducted by Penn Schoen Berland on behalf of the Campaign for Free College Tuition (CFCT) indicates that nearly two-thirds of Americans (63%) support making college tuition free.*

All of this free college tuition activity over the past decade at the state and local level means there are lessons to be learned from others about starting such programs, operating them effectively, and funding them. One purpose of this briefing book is to share those experiences. We'll also provide evidence from those programs that have been around long enough to measure real outcomes.

Without the resources to pay for tuition in ways that maintain the health of a state's institutions of higher learning, the promise is empty. We provide information on different funding approaches, as well as paths states can take to meet their specific needs.

While the information and case studies contained in this briefing book focus on state activity, the federal government has a potential funding role to play. We believe the more than $60 billion the federal government currently spends on college scholarships and tax credits could cover the cost of college tuition for in state students in public colleges across the country if repurposed, assuming states pick up their share of the effort too. As in the past, however, we do not expect states to wait for the federal government. As more states have success in expanding post-secondary free public education the possibility of robust federal financing will undoubtedly increase.

We, at the Campaign for Free College Tuition, are available to help in anyway we can. CFCT is a bipartisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to making a college education affordable for everyone.

Chapter I —
States Taking the Lead in Making Colleges Tuition Free: Current State Programs

Tennessee Promise

Description

The Tennessee Promise is both a scholarship and mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students attending college in Tennessee. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by the Pell grant, the HOPE scholarship, or state student assistance funds. Students may use the scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 27 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institution offering an associate's degree program.

Website

http://tennesseepromise.gov/

Enacting Legislation

http://share.tn.gov/sos/acts/108/pub/pc0900.pdf

Funding Source

A $300 million endowment that was established from surplus lottery funds.

Eligibility

High school seniors, beginning with the class of 2015, who graduate from an eligible Tennessee high school, complete a Tennessee home school program, or, prior to his or her 19th birthday, obtain a GED or HiSET diploma. Applicants must be able to complete the FAFSA, qualify for in-state tuition, and possess a valid Social Security number. Additionally, they must attend mandatory meetings and participate in a mentoring program. In college students must attend full-time, continue to participate in the mentoring program, and perform 8 hours of community service prior to each term the award is received.

Legislative Fiscal Note

http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Fiscal/SB2471.pdf

Endowment Fund Information
http://www.tnpromise.gov/files/Tennessee%20Promise%20Investment%20Information.pdf

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Oregon Promise

Description
The Oregon Promise is a state grant program that covers some or all of the tuition at an Oregon community college. Eligible recipients are recent Oregon high school graduates and GED recipients who enroll in an Oregon community college within six months of graduation. For full-time students, awards range from $1,000 to $3,397 per year, depending on financial need and other state and federal grants awards. The college will automatically deduct a $50 co-pay from the award each term.

Website
http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/oregon-promise.aspx

Enacting Legislation
https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB81/Enrolled

Funding Source
A one-time appropriation of $10 million.

Eligibility
Applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Complete an Oregon Promise Grant Application
- Be a recent Oregon high school graduate or GED recipient
- Document a 2.5 cumulative high school GPA or higher; or a GED score of 145 or higher on each test
- Enroll at least half-time at an Oregon community college within 6 months of high school graduation or GED completion
- Be an Oregon resident for at least 12 months prior to enrolling in community college
- Have filed a FAFSA or ORSAA application and listed at least one Oregon community college

Legislative Budget Report
http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Fiscal/SB2471.pdf
https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/Downloads/MeasureAnalysisDocument/32321

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Michigan Promise Zones

Description
A few years after the Kalamazoo Promise awarded its first scholarships, Michigan's legislature and then Governor Jennifer Granholm enacted the Michigan Promise Zone Authority Act. The measure establishes "Promise Zones," which are public-private partnerships committed to ensuring that every child in a community has a tuition-free path to at least an associate's degree, in economically distressed communities/counties.

Enacting Legislation
http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(av2g1lqilnt33zyogihikcuv))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-549-of-2008.pdf

Funding Source
After two years of operation through private funding, a Promise Zone can receive half the growth in the State Education Tax (SET) within their boundaries. This Tax Increment Financing calculates capture from a base year that is the year before the Promise Zone begins awarding scholarships.

Eligibility
The Promise Zone Authority Act gives each individual Promise Zone considerable authority to establish eligibility criteria so long as they provide high school graduates a tuition-free path to at least an associate degree from one or more post-secondary institution. The Lansing Promise, for example, requires students to: attend, for four or more consecutive years, and graduate from a public or non-public school located within the boundaries of the Lansing School District (LSD); or attend, for eight or more consecutive years, a public or non-public school located within the boundaries of the LSD and obtain a GED before age 20; be admitted to and enroll in Lansing Community College or Michigan State University; and meet eligibility requirements to apply for federal student aid and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year.

Legislative Fiscal Analysis
https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2007-2008/billanalysis/House/pdf/2007-HLA-5375-6.pdf

Additional Information
https://www.wmich.edu/conferencemanagement/promisenet2015/files/Slideshows/AreMichiganPromiseZonestheDIYPromise.pdf

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Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Two-Year Occupational Grant Pilot Program

Description
The program provides financial assistance to students enrolled in qualifying career and technical programs at MnSCU two-year colleges so that students can complete the program within two years or less and find employment in a high-demand occupation. It was created by the 2015 Minnesota Legislature and is funded for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years as a pilot program. The grant is "last dollar" and covers any remaining tuition and general fee charges after the student's Federal Pell Grant and MN State Grant have been applied to the student's account.

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is currently partnering with InsideTrack, a private company, to provide one-on-one mentoring to the recipients of the Minnesota Occupational Grant.

Website
http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2163

Enacting Legislation
https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?year=2015&type=0&doctype=Chapter&id=69

Funding Source
An appropriation of $9,107,000 in fiscal year 2016 and $15,253,000 in fiscal year 2017 for grants and associated mentoring activities.

Eligibility
- Initial enrollment during fall semester 2016 in a qualifying certificate, diploma, AS or AAS program at a MnSCU two-year college immediately following:
    - Earning a high school diploma from a MN high school during the 2015-2016 academic year; or
    - For those without a high school diploma, completing an Adult Basic Education program or passing a GED test as a Minnesota resident during the 2015-2016 academic year; or
    - Completing a 12 or 24-month Americorps program during the 2015-2016 academic year that started immediately after high school graduation during an earlier academic year
- Meet the definition of a "resident" used for state financial aid programs

- Have an adjusted gross income (or wages for non-filers) of $90,000 or less for the 2015 tax year
- Participate in free mentoring services throughout the student's academic program
- Have tuition and fee charges not fully covered by Pell and State Grants during fall semester 2016
- The grant can be renewed for the 2017-18 academic year if the recipients is making satisfactory academic progress and is maintaining a GPA of at least 2.5.

List of Qualifying Programs
http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/MnSCU_OccupationalGrantEligiblePrograms.xlsx

Senate Counsel, Research and Fiscal Analysis Summary
http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scr/billsumm/summary_display_from_db.php?ls=&id=3149

Additional Information
http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/FAManual/MnSCUOccGrant.pdf

Missouri A+ Scholarship Program

Description
The program provides last-dollar funds to eligible graduates of A+ designated high schools attending participating public community college or vocational/technical school, or certain private two-year vocational/technical schools. The tuition amount eligible for reimbursement is capped at the published standard per credit hour tuition rate charged by State Technical College of Missouri. For the 2016-17 academic year, the maximum rate is $159.75 per credit hour or $4.30 per clock-hour.

Website
http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php

Enacting Legislation
http://www.moga.mo.gov/mostatutes/stathtml/16000005451.HTML

Funding Source
The program is funded from both General Revenue and Lottery Proceeds. In FY 2015, approximately $21 million was from Lottery Proceeds and $11.1 million was from General Revenue. This amount provided over 13,100 scholarships during the fiscal year.

Eligibility

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- A written agreement between the student and their high school prior to graduation.
- Attend a designated A+ high school for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to graduation.
- Graduate HS with an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher.
- Have at least a 95% attendance record overall for grades 9-12.
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring, of which up to 25% may include job shadowing.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Beginning with the high school senior class of 2015, have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics.
- Complete a FAFSA.
- Enroll and attend full-time at a participating public community college or vocational/technical school, or private two-year vocational/technical school.
- Post-secondary students need to maintain satisfactory academic progress and a 2.5 minimum GPA.

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Wyoming Hathaway Scholarship

Description

The scholarship has its roots in Governor Stanley Hathaway's 1974 decision to create the state of Wyoming Permanent Mineral Trust Fund. Nearly two decades later, legislators created a scholarship fund that rewards eligible Wyoming students with both merit- and need-based scholarships to attend the University of Wyoming or a Wyoming community college.

Hathaway offers four individual scholarships, and a need-based scholarship that can supplement these merit-based awards. They include:

- **Honors (min 3.5 GPA/25 ACT):** $1,680 per semester
- **Performance (min 3.0 GPA/21 ACT):** $1,260 per semester

- **Opportunity (min 2.5 GPA/19 ACT):** $840 per semester
- **Provisional Opportunity (min 2.5 GPA/17 ACT):** $840 per semester

In-state tuition at a Wyoming community college ranges from $2,186 to $2,640 per year.

Website
http://hathawayscholarship.org/

Enacting Legislation
http://law.justia.com/codes/wyoming/2014/title-21/chapter-16/article-13/

Funding Source
A $400 million permanent endowment.

Eligibility
Minimum eligibility includes a 2.5 HS GPA, completion of Hathaway approved HS courses, and a score of 19 on the ACT. Continued eligibility for college students requires continuous enrollment, meeting satisfactory academic progress criteria, and maintaining a minimum GPA or 2.25 or 2.5 depending upon a recipient's scholarship level.

Additional eligibility information can be found at: http://hathawayscholarship.org/hathaway-scholarship/eligibility-requirements

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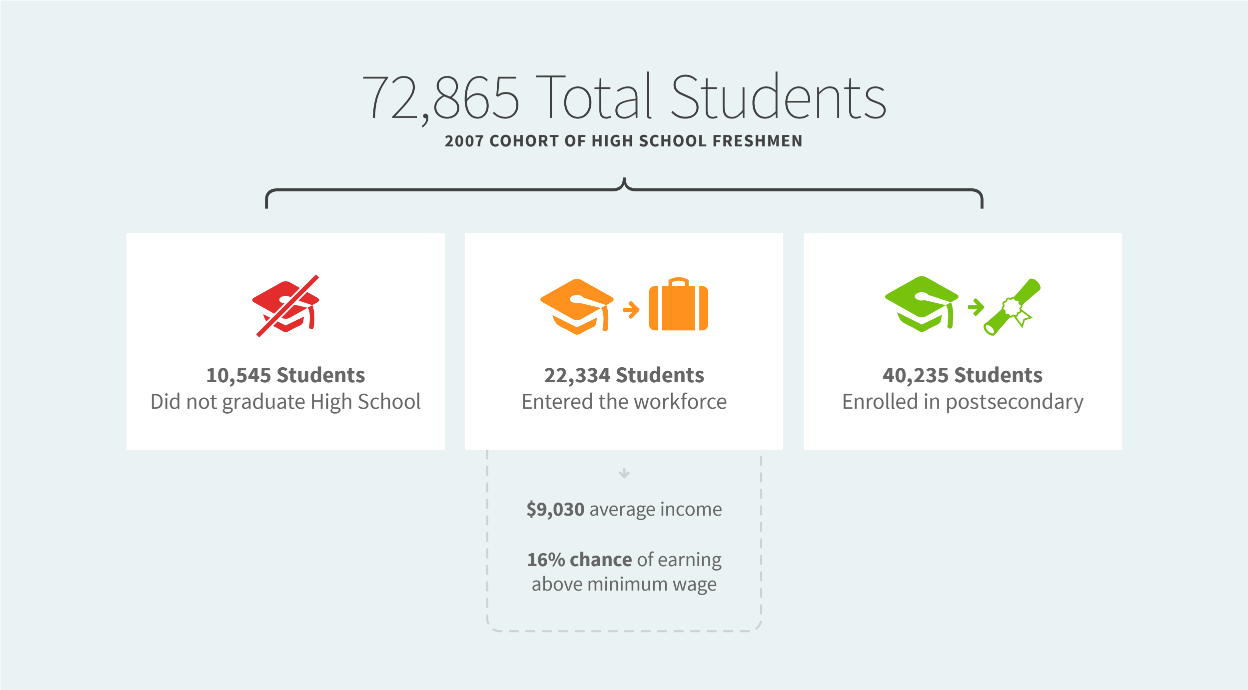
Chapter II —
The New Economic Reality

The Case for Making College Tuition Free

It's a simple fact that our nation's economic success depends on a highly educated and skilled workforce. According to a June 2016 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce report entitled *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots,* "*t*here has been a clear shift in job creation since the second half of the 20th century toward industries that employ a high share of workers with post-secondary attainment, such as healthcare services, consulting and business services, financial services, education services, and government services. These industries accounted for 28 percent of the workforce in 1947; they now account for 46 percent of the workforce." Almost all (11.5 million of 11.6 million) of the new jobs added since the Great Recession have gone to workers with at least some post-secondary education, while jobs for high school graduates have barely grown at all.

The need for a skilled workforce was further illustrated by Mike Krause, the former Executive Director of the Tennessee Promise in the Office of Governor Haslam and current Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Committee, at the Campaign for Free College Tuition Southern Summit on College Affordability in the spring of 2016. He noted that Tennessee was 43rd in the nation in 2015 in terms of education attainment by state and showed longitudinal data from the 2007 cohort of high school freshman indicating that 30% of them entered the workforce directly after high school. This subgroup had a $9,030 annual income and only a 16% chance of earning above the minimum wage. The Tennessee Promise – which incorporates mentorship, a last dollar scholarship to a two-year community or technical college, and a framework focused on college success – advanced with overwhelming support through a Republican controlled legislature to help change the narrative for a state seeking to be a national leader in advanced manufacturing.



Price of College can be a Barrier to Educational Attainment

Since 1973, according to Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) data, "average inflation-adjusted public college tuition has increased by 274 percent while median household income has grown by only 7 percent…The sharp tuition increases states have imposed since the recession have exacerbated the longer-term trend. Tuition jumped nearly 30 percent between the 2007-08 and 2014-15 school years."

It should however be noted that the ongoing recovery has allowed states to modestly increase their investment in two- and four-year colleges from recessionary lows. The College Board's 2015 Trends in College Pricing report indicates that the average published 2015-16 tuition and fees for in-state students at a public four-year college increased $265 or 2.9 percent from the previous year. Community college students experienced a $99 or 3 percent increase during the same period.

A Gallup-Lumina Foundation Poll conducted in late 2014 found that more than three-quarters (79%) of American adults do not think that education beyond high school is affordable for everyone in the U.S. who needs it. The problem is particularly acute for lower and even middle class families who see higher education as a key to improving the lives of their children, yet see cost as a huge barrier. According to an annual survey of college freshman conducted by UCLA's Cooperative Institutional Research Program, 84.1 percent of Pell Grant recipients expressed concerns about their ability to pay for college compared to just 56.7 percent of students not receiving Pell Grants. The survey also found that:

- 45.2% of students indicated that the cost of attending their current institution was a "very important" factor in their choosing where to go to college;
- 47.1% of students reported that their current institution's financial aid offer was a "very important" factor in their decision to enroll at that campus.

Student Loan Debt

"About seven in 10 (69%) college seniors who graduated from public and private nonprofit colleges in 2014 had student loan debt," according to a report by the Project on Student Debt at The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS). "These borrowers owed an average of $28,950." From 2004 to 2014, average student debt rose by 56% from $18,550 to $28,950.

Research suggests that student loan debt impacts Americans in the following ways:

- **Career Choice.** Studies suggest that student loan debt drives graduates away from low-paying and public-sector jobs. A 2013 survey conducted by the American Student Assistance® (ASA) found 30% of respondents indicated that "student loan debt was the deciding factor, or had considerable impact, on their choice of career field."
- **Marriage and Family.** A 2011 study found that individuals under age 37 with outstanding student debt have a lower probability of marriage than individuals students without outstanding debt. "If they marry, graduates with student debt express less satisfaction with their marriage than students with no debt (Dew, 2008). Moreover, when asked, survey data indicate that 43% of student loan borrowers say they have delayed having children (American Student Assistance, 2013; also see, Baum and O'Malley, 2003)."
- **Home Ownership.** The Federal Reserve of New York reported in 2013 that "thirty-year-olds with no history of student loans are more likely to have home-secured debt than those with a history of student loans."
- **Retirement Savings.** "73% of those responding to ASA's survey said they have put off saving for retirement or other investments because of their student loans."
- **Small Business Formation.** The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia found a significant and economically meaningful negative correlation between changes in student loan debt and net business formation for those firms with one to four employees. This is important because these small businesses depend on personal debt the most to finance new businesses." Based on the researchers model increased "student debt reduced the number of businesses with one to four employees by 14% between 2000 and 2010."

America’s Historic Commitment to Free Education

Rising student debt levels are a dangerous warning sign that our country’s historical commitment to education as a key component of the promise of upward economic mobility is being abandoned. America has always used the instrument of government to try and provide sufficient funds to those willing to undertake their studies seriously to acquire the skills and knowledge they needed to engage in economic, civic, and artistic pursuits without overburdening them financially either during their studies or after. Until now.

In every era, beginning with the Northwest Ordinance setting aside land for one room schoolhouses, to the institution of mandatory education through the establishment of free primary education in all states at the time of the Civil War, the country has made educational opportunity a lynchpin of American society. In the 20th Century, the expansion of educational opportunities continued as our growing Industrial Age economy required workers with a high school education for our factories and offices. Government funds in every state and community were set aside to provide a free, public high school education for boys and girls to respond to these new demands. Later in the century, after WWII, the GI Bill of Rights and then the Higher Education Act of 1965 were enacted to further encourage college enrollment, thereby establishing the educational foundation for our rapidly expanding middle class. It is only in this century that we have asked a generation, millennials, to self-finance the education they need, and our country needs, to be economically successful. This wrongheaded inter-generational and economically disastrous policy needs to end before America loses its global competitive edge for good.

America has always used government resources to provide sufficient funds to those willing and able to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. Now it’s time to expand that concept from primary and secondary education (K-12) to higher education to ensure we have a skilled workforce capable of competing in the 21st Century economy. Some states have already undertaken this expansion by making their community colleges tuition free and we look forward to working with others in 2017 and beyond to accomplish this most worthy goal.

Chapter III —
What's In Your Promise?

State and local place-based scholarship programs typically are categorized as first dollar or last dollar. While there are important distinctions that we will examine further below, the good news is that both can make public colleges tuition free for students.

First Dollar Scholarships

This model pays a student's tuition, and required fees, at an eligible college before the award of other grant assistance – most likely federal Pell Grants, although it can also take into account state need-based grants. In such instances, Pell and state grant awards can be used to pay non-tuition related expenses including books, transportation, housing and food.

Two of the nation's oldest Promise programs – the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Promise and the El Dorado (Arkansas) Promise – apply a first-dollar model. Both communities determine the scholarship amount based on length of enrollment in their respective public school system – starting at 65 percent of the cost for attending public schools for the preceding four years to 100 percent for students attending public schools since kindergarten. This residency provision is designed to encourage full attendance in the community's public schools, thereby increasing the likelihood of recipients returning to the community upon college graduation.

The principle argument in favor of first dollar Promise programs is that it allows low income students to use Pell and state grants to address non-tuition related costs, increasing the likelihood that recipients will be able to stay in school and have more time to focus on their studies. According to Sara Goldrick-Rab of Temple University, non-tuition costs as share of attendance are 50 percent at four year or above institutions and over 70 percent at two year colleges. The main argument against first dollar scholarships is the cost of such an approach. Using data derived from the US Department of Education's Integrated Post-secondary Data System (IPEDS), CFCT estimates total foregone revenues, if free college tuition was offered to all in-state undergraduates, ranges from $42.8 million in Delaware to $4.96 billion in California.

Last Dollar Scholarships

The Tennessee Promise and most other community Promise programs provide a last dollar scholarship. This means that the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by Pell or state grants.

The main advantage of a last dollar scholarship is that it takes advantage of existing Pell and state grant dollars to reduce cost. While tuition at Tennessee community colleges is about $4,000 annually, a Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) presentation indicated that the average Tennessee Promise award for the program's first cohort – who started college in the Fall of 2015 – was $850.

Robert Kelchen, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Seton Hall University, argues that "another important benefit of last-dollar scholarship programs is informational. Students may be induced to attend college simply by having better knowledge of what college costs, even if they do not receive any additional money."

Last dollar scholarships are criticized for not providing benefits to Pell-eligible students. U.S. Representative Steve Cohen writes in The Tennessean, "the federal need-based Pell Grant provides up to $5,700 – nearly $2,000 more than the cost of full-time tuition at a community college in Tennessee. So the neediest students will not benefit at all." He also expressed concern that "ill-prepared students will receive Promise and then fail to complete community college."

A Middle Dollar Approach

The Oregon Promise, enacted in 2015, provides a minimum benefit of $1,000. Low income students who have tuition covered by federal and state grants, are eligible to receive a $1,000 grant to assist with the cost of college outside of tuition, including books, transportation, food, and housing. Preliminary data shows that 6,000 Oregon Promise scholars have enrolled in community college.

Eligibility Criteria

Promise communities and states apply one of the models below to determine scholarship eligibility. Small Promise programs may have both merit and need based eligibility criteria to limit program costs.

Universal Model

Universal Promise programs do not stipulate need based or academic requirements – such as a minimum GPA or test scores – for initial scholarship eligibility. This does not mean that these programs are without eligibility criteria. The Kalamazoo Promise, for example, requires a minimum of four years of continuous enrollment in the city's public schools and college admittance. They also require their scholars to maintain a 2.0 GPA at the post-secondary institution.

The Tennessee promise requires adherence to a strict application deadline, completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), attendance at two mandatory meetings led by the local partnering organization, the completion of eight hours of community service per semester, and application and full-time enrollment in an eligible institution.

Research from the W.E. Upjohn Institute indicates that the Kalamazoo Promise has a 12-percentage point effect on overall education attainment and 10 percentage points on the attainment of a college degree. "These overall effects are larger than found in recent studies of scholarships that are more targeted. For the merit-based West Virginia PROMISE program, Scott-Clayton (2011) finds a 4–5 percentage point increase in bachelor's completion, a little more than 10 percent of the pre-treatment mean. For the need-based Florida Student Access Grant, Castleman and Long (forthcoming) find bachelor's completion effects of about 4–5 percentage points (22 percent). For the need-based Wisconsin Scholars Grant, Goldrick-Rab et al. (2015) find a 4–5 percentage point (29 percent) increase in bachelor's attainment."

Need Based Model

While the main argument for a need based model is that it targets limited resources to students with the most need, it is uncommon for place-based scholarships to be need-based. On the community-level, the Denver Scholarship Foundation limits eligibility to an expected family contribution (EFC) of less than 1.5 times the federal government's Pell Grant limit, or in some cases, Free and Reduced Lunch eligible students.

This model is however common-place in awarding state financial aid. According to the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, exclusively need-based aid constituted 47.5 percent of all state aid to undergraduates, exclusively merit-based aid accounted for 18.0 percent, with the rest, 34.5 percent, accounted for by other programs and by programs with both need and merit components. In total, funding for undergraduate need-based grant aid nationwide was about $7.8 billion in 2014-15. However, "eight states (California, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Washington, Illinois, and North Carolina) collectively awarded about $5.5 billion in undergraduate need-based grant aid, accounting for about 70 percent of all aid of this type."

Merit Based Model

Several community-based scholarships and the Oregon Promise, on the state level, have merit components. In most cases, a minimum GPA ranging from 2.5 to 3.0 is required. The Oregon Promise, for example, requires a 2.5 high school grade point average. However, some programs also have ACT or SAT score requirements. Proponents of merit-based criteria argue that such requirements ensure post-secondary readiness and allow students to "earn" tuition-free college.

According to Donald Heller of the University of San Francisco, “the research has demonstrated that merit aid programs do not increase college access for students who would otherwise be unlikely to attend college.” He also notes data from Michigan and Florida indicates the rate at which scholarships were awarded differed greatly among students from different racial and ethnic groups, and among students from communities of different income levels. “In both states, students in the 20 percent of schools in the wealthiest communities (as measured by the proportion of students on free- or reduced-price lunch in high school) received scholarships at rates more than twice that of students in the poorest communities.”

New Mexico’s Legislative Lottery Scholarship has a unique twist on the merit based model as it allows students to “earn” a scholarship based on post-secondary performance in their first semester with a 2.5 GPA. The initial scholarship begins with the second semester of enrollment at a post-secondary institution. Thereafter, each scholarship is for a period of one semester subject to revocation for failure to maintain a cumulative 2.5 GPA. “The scholarship may be renewed on a semester basis until the award recipient has received seven (7) semesters of scholarship awards at a four-year institution or until the student graduates with a bachelor’s degree from an eligible institution, whichever is sooner. Student attending a community college are eligible for three (3) semesters of scholarship awards.”

Other Eligibility Criteria

FAFSA Completion

Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a near universal requirement for last dollar Promise programs. All existing state programs require its completion. However, both the Oregon Promise and the MnSCU (Minnesota) Two-Year Occupational Grant Pilot Program have alternative applications for undocumented students.

The Tennessee Promise has bolstered Tennessee’s FAFSA completion rate to the highest in the nation. According to a joint statement by Governor Bill Haslam (R) and Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Executive Director Mike Krause, THEC estimates that “that 70.3 percent of 2015-16 high school seniors in Tennessee filed a FAFSA.” This is at least ten percentage points higher than FAFSA completion rates in the other three states, New Jersey, Delaware and Massachusetts, that rank near the top of FAFSA submissions.

Mentorship

Mentorship is a central component of the Tennessee Promise. In Tennessee, the non-profit tnAchieves serves as the partnering organization to Tennessee Promise in 85 counties of 95 counties. They are currently seeking to recruit 9,000 mentors before November 20, 2016.

According to Governor Haslam's office, "Tennessee Promise mentors are required to be at least 21 years old and attend a one-hour training session and two, one-hour meetings with their students over the course of a year. On average, mentors spend about an hour a month working with three to seven students as they transition from high school to college, reminding them of important deadlines, encouraging them and serving as a trusted resource."

A paper authored by Randy Boyd, the Founder of tnAchieves and Tennessee's current Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, and Teresa Lubbers, Indiana's Commissioner of Higher Education, indicates that "tnAchieves relies heavily on its local advisory councils to provide guidance on the best place to recruit mentors in each community. In addition to assisting students through the Tennessee Promise process, tnAchieves is building advocates for education through the mentoring program. tnAchieves forms partnerships with the business community to engage its employees to serve as mentors, particularly in metropolitan areas. In 2015, 35 percent of mentors came from business/industry. It is logical for this sector to participate and support tnAchieves, as the ultimate goal is to provide the state's business and industry with a more qualified workforce."

Additionally, Boyd and Lubbers report that University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research 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.

Community Service

The Tennessee Promise also requires the completion of eight hours of community service per semester. Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam said, "the research shows that students who serve in their communities are more engaged and more successful, and it's a great lesson to teach them – that while we're engaged in assisting you in your higher education goals, we're also asking you to give back."

Age at Time of College Enrollment

Many studies have shown a strong correlation between how soon after high school graduation a student enrolls in college and completion of their chosen college program. For that reason, programs such as the Tennessee Promise require applicants to be an immediate high school graduate or complete a home school program prior to turning 19 years of age.

By contrast, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) argued in a recent report that states serious about achieving their goals for a college educated workforce cannot attain those goals without free college tuition programs open to students who dropped out of college without a degree or who failed to enroll upon graduation from high school. The report points out that most states do not have a sufficient number of high school students to meet their targets even if a large percentage of them graduate and enroll in college. Accordingly, they call for free college tuition programs to include revised state residency and dependency status requirements.

Specifically mentioned is the inclusion of “independent” students in the scholarship programs eligibility requirements. The federal government considers students who are at least 24 years of age or are married or have children as “independent” but it also includes younger students who are in foster care or are homeless. Military veterans regardless of age are also considered independent under FAFSA rules.

Additionally, current free community college proposals require students to graduate from an in-state high school. ECS argues that the eligibility criteria for in-state college tuition should be used instead so as not to exclude current adult residents who may have graduated from high school in another state.

This issue of age or time of college enrollment is clearly related to the goals a state adopts for its college completion policies. Tennessee has addressed the potential conflict by creating two programs – one for recent high school graduates and another, called Tennessee Reconnect for those who have not been enrolled in college for at least two years. Under that program, students who do enroll in the state’s community or technical college are eligible for free tuition so long as they have been a resident of Tennessee for at least one year, are considered independent in FAFSA, have an adjusted gross income of less than $36,000 per year, and have already completed thirty hours of college credit. Unlike their Promise program for high school graduates, such scholars do not have to meet with mentors or perform community service but they do have to enroll in at least nine hours of course credits and maintain a 2.0 GPA.

Chapter IV —
Funding and Sustaining Promise Programs

The original community-based Promise programs were funded using philanthropic donations either from individual donors, as in Kalamazoo, Michigan, or the corporate sector, as in El Dorado, Arkansas. However, these funds are inherently difficult to scale to the size and sustainability required for a statewide Promise program. Instead, states have turned to existing revenue streams, such as Tennessee's lottery, or new revenue streams, as Michigan did with property tax reform, to create a match for local philanthropic giving. Oregon, which did not have a surplus pool of funds to use, simply appropriated a fixed sum in the state's two-year budget cycle to gain some experience in program costs and impact. Meanwhile, other more innovative sources for funding and sustaining Promise programs are being developed for states to consider as alternative answers to the question: from where will the money come?

Designing Sustainable Promise Programs

No matter what solution is chosen, the long-term sustainability of any Promise program is crucial to its success. A dedicated and diversified funding stream is preferable in selecting how to fund a state's program, since such a structure is more likely to survive the inevitable changes in a state's fiscal and political environment. This ability to continue over an extended period is especially important for Promise programs since institutional operating costs – resulting from enrollment increases – are likely to grow over time.

To further enhance the ability of a state to make a long-term commitment to students early in their K-12 education payable as much as twelve years later, CFCT recommends the creation of a "Dynamic Endowment Fund" or **DEF** as the vehicle for holding and managing the funds. Such a structure, with its own board and management, can help protect the funds from the vagaries of a state's appropriation process. It also provides the most assurance that a multi-year promise to future generations of students will be kept. The Tennessee Promise takes these issues into consideration in its design.

The 2014 legislation creating the Tennessee Promise established an irrevocable trust consisting of the Tennessee Promise endowment account and the Tennessee Promise special reserve account. Funding for the endowment came from two sources: 1) Total unexpended lottery scholarship revenues from the previous 10 years had accumulated to more than $400 million. From these reserves, approximately $312 million was transferred to the endowment; 2) A transfer of $47 million from TSAC's student loan guaranty operating reserve ("Tennessee Promise Scholarship Act of 2014," 2014). These two deposits brought the initial endowment balance to approximately $360 million. Investment of the endowment is administered by the Treasurer of the State of Tennessee. The Promise sustainability model included long-term endowment earnings of 4%, yielding approximately $7.2 million on an annual basis. Funding for the special reserve is derived from the following sources: 1) Interest earnings from the Promise endowment; 2) total annual net lottery proceeds (i.e., lottery revenues in excess of expenditures on scholarships and TELS administration); and 3) interest earnings on the special reserve. The special reserve is invested in similar long-term instruments as the endowment, thus, yielding a similar rate as the endowment. Annual interest earnings on the special reserve will fluctuate, however, depending on the current balance.

Most states, however, will not be as fortunate as Tennessee in finding surplus funds to establish a Promise DEF. Instead, states will need to find new sources of revenue to fund their investment in making their college's tuition free.

The first place to look for at least some of the revenue is in places where the revenue is not already spoken for. That is how California funded a college scholarship program open only to middle class families. In 2012, the voters of California passed Proposition 39 which closed a loophole in the way out-of-state corporations were taxed. The proposition set aside half of the incremental revenues that would flow from this change to the tax code for the legislature to allocate as part of its general fund budget. With the strong support of the Speaker of the House at the time, that money was designated to be used to fund a middle-class college scholarship program that would pay for up to one-third of the tuition costs for students from middle class families as defined by family income. While the initial amounts were smaller than that, by designating these funds for this purpose, the legislature created a source of revenue that could grow over time to achieve the program's goal.

Similarly, when Michigan reformed its personal property tax assessment process, the Republican legislature and the Democratic governor agreed to set aside 50% of the revenues that would grow over time under the new law to fund Promise programs in ten communities in the state so long as they also raised private money to get their Promise program started.

The second way to find tax revenues to support a state Promise program is to establish a new revenue stream for that purpose and use the popularity of free college tuition to help build support for such a plan. The state of Arkansas, under the leadership of then Lt. Governor Bill Halter, established a lottery to fund college scholarships by constitutional amendment. Previous efforts to establish a lottery in the state had failed. This time the proposal restricted the use of the funds solely for college scholarships and required the state to maintain at a minimum its existing level of spending on scholarships. So all money from the lottery was incremental revenue for college scholarships. The proposal passed with over 63% voter approval.

Many states would like to extend their property taxes to the purchase of services, rather than products in light of the shift in consumer spending in each category. If the funding of free college tuition were the end goal of such a shift, the chances of it being approved improve dramatically. These examples highlight the importance of not being constrained by existing tax structures and budgeting priorities in considering the establishment of a state Promise program.

But states can also look beyond the power to tax for ways to fund at least part of their Promise initiative.

Non-Traditional Funding Sources

Several additional sources for funding Promise programs have been proposed that go beyond the appropriations and taxing authority of state government. Given the importance of creating diversified funding streams for a State Promise to survive over time, all of them warrant further examination and consideration.

The Community Link Foundation (CLF) Model.
CLF, a non-partisan, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, has developed and refined a unique system of sustainable funding for charitable organizations that is highly adaptable for Promise programs of all sizes.

CLF's approach does not rely on new monies from outside the Promise community; rather it uses the collective purchasing power of the whole community to generate the requisite funds to maintain and endow its own program. The CLF model for Promise communities uses two “tools” to achieve self-sufficiency.

The first tool entails a "top-down" purchasing system for governmental spending. Through a unique partnership with Minnesota-based US Bank, CLF can save a governmental entity up to 75% of its transactional processing fees on purchases and up to 3% on vendor discounts. The electronic procurement card also can reduce the cost of making each payment if the government is still using paper checks, which cost $50 for each transaction to just $6 per payment. These savings or cash back refunds can be dedicated to funding a state’s Promise program. This purchasing card program can be initiated by whoever is responsible for approving purchases by the governmental entity.

The second instrument for funding is CLF's consumer loyalty card. This system makes it easy for all citizens of a state to participate in supporting the state’s Promise program. Through its partnerships with merchants such as grocery stores, communications companies, gasoline providers and real estate groups, CLF can generate consumer rewards at the point of sale. A customer need only register an already existing loyalty card with the retailer or service provider to complete the process. By way of example, a $100 grocery purchase automatically results in a $4 contribution to the state's Promise program.

While government funding may ebb and flow, consumer spending will always continue in a predictable pattern that allows for long-range budgeting. Because of the IRS ruling that CLF's rewards are not taxable and can be deducted when donated to a not-for-profit organization, participants can benefit financially from giving to a state Promise program's endowment fund, helping to encourage a state's residents to sign up to help fund free college tuition for students in their state.

Corporate Donations: Stock Options and Warrants

A stock option grants the recipient (called the holder – in this case, the DEF) the right to purchase a company's stock at a specified price (called the strike price – usually the price of the stock on the date the option was issued) for a specified time period (usually a number of years). If the company's stock price rises above the strike price at any time within the specified period, the nonprofit public charity holder can exercise its right to purchase the stock at the strike price and then immediately sell the stock at the prevailing market price – and can keep the difference. As long as the company has issued the stock itself, the difference in the stock prices is a gift that is the value of the company's deferred tax-deductible contribution to the nonprofit public charity. (See IRS Revenue Ruling 75-348.)

In addition to its tax advantages for the contributor, stock options would be a preferred way to receive corporate donations because such donations lower the amount of money that would need to be raised initially. If, for example, on average the market, and therefore the average company's stock price, grew at 5% per year, then the price of a share of stock worth $100 today would be $27.63 greater in five years. Thus, the value of the stocks for which options are gifted to the DEF alone would need to be only about $440M to have the endowment funded with $526M five years later.

For non-public companies, the range of performance of any stock options donated is likely to be more extreme. Assuming a non-public company contributes stock options at a founder's or early round price, then the strike price will be very low. While many of these companies may never go public, a small percentage of them are likely to sell stock publicly or privately to other companies as they grow. For this smaller number of financially successful companies, the sales price will likely be significantly higher than the strike price of the option. So, the rewards will be greater, but less frequent or likely, and hence less predictable. One way to encourage such donations from new entrepreneurial companies would be to provide them special status in their "Benefit type" corporate application if they make donations to the DEF, should they seek to use that part of the state's corporate laws.

There are two alternatives to the use of stock options to fund private sector contribution to a state Promise program. One of them is the use of warrants, which function very much like stock options do. Unlike a stock option, which is typically issued in relation to corporate employment or service, a warrant is typically issued as part of a financial transaction or investment. If a state wanted to characterize contributions to its DEF as being an investment in the state's future, then warrants would be the preferred instrument. Both stock options and warrants involve a minor dilution of stockholder value and therefore require board approval before being granted. However, warrants may be less familiar to many boards as a financing vehicle and therefore harder donations for the DEF to secure.

The other alternative would be for companies to donate through their existing charitable foundation or even to make stock contributions directly to the endowment. Corporations that have established foundations for making charitable donations of all types often use their own stock to fund such foundations. Where corporate foundations exist, the DEF might well find this a simpler and more direct way to receive private donations. For corporations without such foundations, however, a direct donation of stock may not provide as attractive a methodology as stock options or even warrants.

While corporate donations have funded some community based Promise programs, the concept of stock options or warrants have not been tried at the state level as yet.

Pay for Success: Social Impact Bonds

President Barack Obama created a Pay for Success initiative to use social impact bonds to fund social programs with more than a half a billion in funding for fiscal year 2014. The initiative, coordinated by the Departments of Labor, Justice, and Education, "aims to empower cities, states and nonprofits to support more public-private partnerships that produce measurable results in their communities." Efforts are in some form of development in at least 14 states, with California and Massachusetts taking an especially strong interest in using Pay for Success grants to launch social impact bond efforts. However, no state is currently contemplating the use of Social Impact Bonds to fund Promise programs.

In a Pay for Success/Social Impact Bond model, the government contracts with a private entity to offer a social service for a specific target population—in the case of Promise programs a defined set of K-12 students. The government pays for the services rendered based on the program's success as measured by comparing the outcomes of individuals who receive the service, in this case, students, relative to the outcomes of a comparison or control group that is not offered the services. If a state has carefully defined its goals for a Promise program, this approach could provide an effective way to tie the achievement of those goals to the cost of conducting the program, but only if the program was made available to some students but not all.

To cover upfront costs, the social service provider or its intermediary receives a loan from investors who will later receive a share of the government's payout of the performance contract should the intervention prove successful. This loan is called a "Social Impact Bond" even though it is not a government bond in the traditional sense, but rather a loan from private funders. Because most educational providers don't have the financial capacity to wait several years for payment of their services, Pay for Success Promise programs would need to use an operating loan from private funders who would provide upfront capital in exchange for the lion's share of the payments that become available if the performance targets are met. Thus, while it is tempting to think of PFS as a tool for transferring risk or solving budgetary constraint problems, most governments that are using Pay for Success to fund other social service initiatives have set aside funding upfront to cover the cost of the intervention, performance payments to the investors, and the transaction costs of setting up the contract.

There are other elements of a Pay for Success model that may make it unsuitable to fund even a portion of a state Promise program without a thorough understanding of the return on investment a state might expect from the initiative. To create a viable College Promise PFS project, a state would need to commit funding to pay the investors if success is achieved. Success payments are usually determined by calculating the cost savings as well as the non-cost "social benefits" generated from achieving the performance targets. In the case of the PFS program, if the benefits of a college education accrue to the individual student earning the college degree in the form of higher wages, then the benefits to the state come from increased tax revenues – if the state has an income tax. Other benefits that could be included in the performance contract would involve reduced spending on social services, improvement in the quality of the workforce, and/or positive residual effects to the community. Since the benefits of the intervention needs to equal or exceed the cost of the intervention, a successful PFS project would need to either identify sufficient cost savings or other benefits generated by the intervention accruing to a single beneficiary or bring together multiple beneficiaries as payers—for example, reductions in Medicaid spending would be shared by Federal and State governments— so both levels of governments might need to act together as payers. While creating agreements between multiple payers is not an insurmountable challenge, it makes a PFS project more difficult for states to establish. Couple these challenges with the need to measure the success of Promise programs over a decade and the use of a Pay for Success/Social Impact Bond to finance other than a pilot Promise program becomes relatively difficult.

Pay for Success: Income Share Agreements

Income share agreements (ISA) are new in the world of higher education finance. Income-driven payment models have been applied to federal student loans, but ISAs apply this model to private sources of financing, both nonprofit and for-profit. With an ISA, a funder provides students with the funds required to pay for college and, in return, the students promise to pay a percentage of their income for a number of years after leaving school. Thus, ISAs are similar to income-driven loan repayment in that they link students' payments to their future income. Unlike student loans, however, ISAs have no principal balance and carry no interest. Recipients could end up paying more or less than they originally receive, depending on how well they do after college. While relatively small in scale, some educational institutions, rather than state governments, have started ISA projects:

In April 2016, Purdue University announced the creation of the "Back a Boiler" ISA fund, an income-based alternative to private loans and federal Parent PLUS loans. Currently juniors and seniors from all majors are eligible to receive funding through the program for tuition and other expenses. The terms of the agreements vary, but the length can run from roughly seven to nine years and the percentage of income, per $10,000 received by the student, ranges from roughly two percent to five percent. Students are not required to pay anything in years where they earn below $20,000, and there is a cap on total payments set at 2.5 times the amount initially received.

Several nontraditional institutions in the U.S. have adopted an ISA model in lieu of charging tuition. Two examples are Holberton School, a two-year software engineering program, and App Academy, a coding boot camp. Both institutions only require that students pay a percentage of their salary for a set period once they have found a job. Also, the non-profit 13th Avenue Funding has conducted a small ISA pilot with low income, low-wealth students in Santa Maria, California. The group is now working to establish larger ISA funds for other low-income and first-generation students.

ISAs could help state Promise programs overcome the challenge of scale and sustainability. Students would be asked to pay a percentage of their income for a set time after school—and only in years when they earn above a certain amount. Accordingly, students who benefit from the fund would re-seed it for future students. This structure could enable a Promise program to serve many more students for the same level of public commitment. Furthermore, a fund arranged in this manner could also facilitate greater investment per student without increasing the percentage of income contribution asked of students. For example, a Promise program that offers additional support services, such as mentoring, could yield significant improvements in student outcomes that outweigh the additional costs. That would make it possible to finance those costs with little to no change in the percentage of income payment required of students after they graduate. In theory, if the gains were big enough, the student contribution as a percentage of their income could be reduced.

Traditional Promise programs are free in that students are not required to pay anything back. However, a program built around ISAs requires students to pay a percentage of their income that, on average, is designed to repay funds given to them. Furthermore, establishing an ISA fund requires some estimation of what students are likely to earn in the future, and these models can obviously turn out to be wrong. Given the current concern over student debt, this aspect of ISAs creates a potential marketing and political challenge for those advocating their use, such as the state of Indiana, to help fund a Promise program. The public would have to be convinced that it is beneficial to have college tuition be free at the time of its use, rather than free for a lifetime. Similar concerns have limited the appeal of so-called “Pay it Forward” approaches in states that have discussed them as a way to provide free college tuition. Adding the prospect that the funds being loaned to the student would come from private actors further complicates the political appeal of this approach.

Community Promise Program Incentives

The Michigan Promise Zone legislation creates an incentive for communities who want to create their own version of the Kalamazoo Promise by making state funding available depending on a community’s own efforts to fund their Promise. This model need not be limited to what is in effect a “matching grant” approach like federal/state programs for highways or health care. Several counties in Maryland are making their community colleges tuition free by establishing “Economic Impact Scholarships” for residents that meet a specific set of eligibility criteria. Some counties, such as

Wicomico, made the commitment using existing revenue streams; others such as Prince George's, are contemplating using new revenue from casino gambling to pay for their Promise program.

Even for states without a new revenue source, incentives can be created to encourage communities to enact Promise programs, which can serve as the first step toward a statewide program. For instance, in those states where property taxes are levied to fund local schools, states could enact legislation allowing such levies to be used to make their community colleges tuition free as well. Increasing property taxes by a vote of the community to enable residents to send their children to their local community college for all or part of their higher educational experience can be especially attractive in cities with lower income families and major corporations that pay a large share of the existing property tax revenue. Of course, the details of this approach will vary widely depending on the state's structure for collecting and distributing property tax revenues, but it is a step that can be taken with literally no cost to the state.

College Savings Accounts

Each state in the United States offers a 529 savings plan (named for the relevant section of the federal tax code), a state-sponsored, tax-preferred savings plan for qualified post-secondary education expenses. By themselves, 529 accounts do not meet the definition of a Promise program nor help in financing one. However, fourteen states provide either a seed deposit or offer a matching grant into 529 accounts, and seven states have mechanisms in place to provide a universal seed deposit or match. For example, Tennessee provides a 4:1 match for all deposits to a state 529 account (with a minimum $25 deposit), up to $500/year and $1,500 per lifetime. By incenting families to start saving early for their child's education through what are generally known as College Savings Accounts (CSA), states can generate funds to help pay for college tuition when the student enrolls in college.

If a state's goal for instituting a Promise program is to create a college going culture early in a student's educational experience, incenting CSAs provides one way to involve families in this cultural shift. Findings from the SEED for Oklahoma Kids research experiment, in which children were randomly selected from a state population and randomly assigned to receive $1,000 in a CSA at birth, indicate that having a CSA improves parents' college expectations for their children. Parents in the treatment group had higher expectations for their children and their expectations were more likely to remain constant or increase during the time period studied than parents in the control group.

Just as Promise programs have been proven to impact public high school student performance, an alternative design for a CSA program has been shown to increase the number of students prepared and planning to enroll in college. The Tacoma Housing Authority in Washington, in collaboration with the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CfED), Tacoma Public Schools, Heritage Bank and others, has launched a CSA program that rewards a student's academic performance after the fifth grade, rather than matching a family's financial contribution. In sixth grade, the students and a counselor devise an individualized plan to take the student through high school graduation and enrollment into college. The plan sets milestones along the way. As the student meets each milestone, the program makes a set deposit into the account.

If the goal of a state's Promise program is to increase the number of students who graduate, there is some evidence that incenting the establishment of CSAs can help achieve that outcome. In the aggregate, children who have a college saver identity and $500 or more in school designated savings are about two times more likely to graduate from college than children who have a college-bound identity only. Children in low- and moderate-income households with college-saver identities and school designated savings of $500 or less are about three times more likely to graduate college than children who have a college-bound identity only. Further, African-American children with college-saver identities and school-designated savings of $500 or more are about two and half times more likely to graduate from college than those with a college-bound identity only.

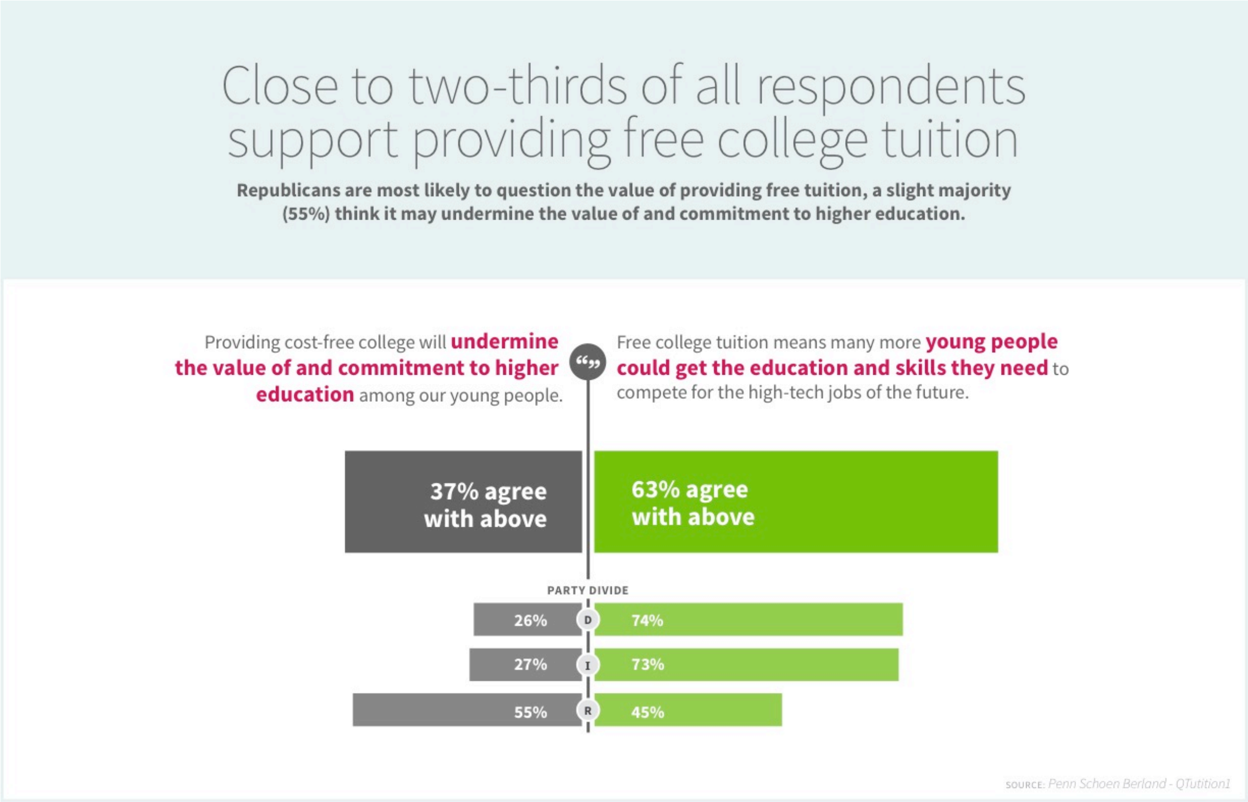
As a result, some states, such as Indiana, are considering linking their free college tuition programs to the establishment of incentives for funding CSAs as Indiana has done. Doing so does not necessarily increase the amount of government funds required to initiate a Promise program. The city of Oakland, CA, for example incorporated CSAs into their Promise program and found a generous corporate donor to fully fund the entire cost of the program for the first five years. The CEO's decision reflects the larger interest among corporations to associate themselves with efforts to give back to the community and improve the image of their brand among both their customers and their employees.

State incentives for CSA's do not necessarily require the upfront expenditure of funds. Just as several states exclude 529 savings from determining Temporary Assistance to Needy Families eligibility today, CSA formations could be encouraged by also exempting them from such calculations as well. Additionally, expanding the ability of both 529 and CSA contributions to be made by those without a banking relationship would help serve lower income populations – and bring the rules into alignment with current electronic payment habits of many millennial families.

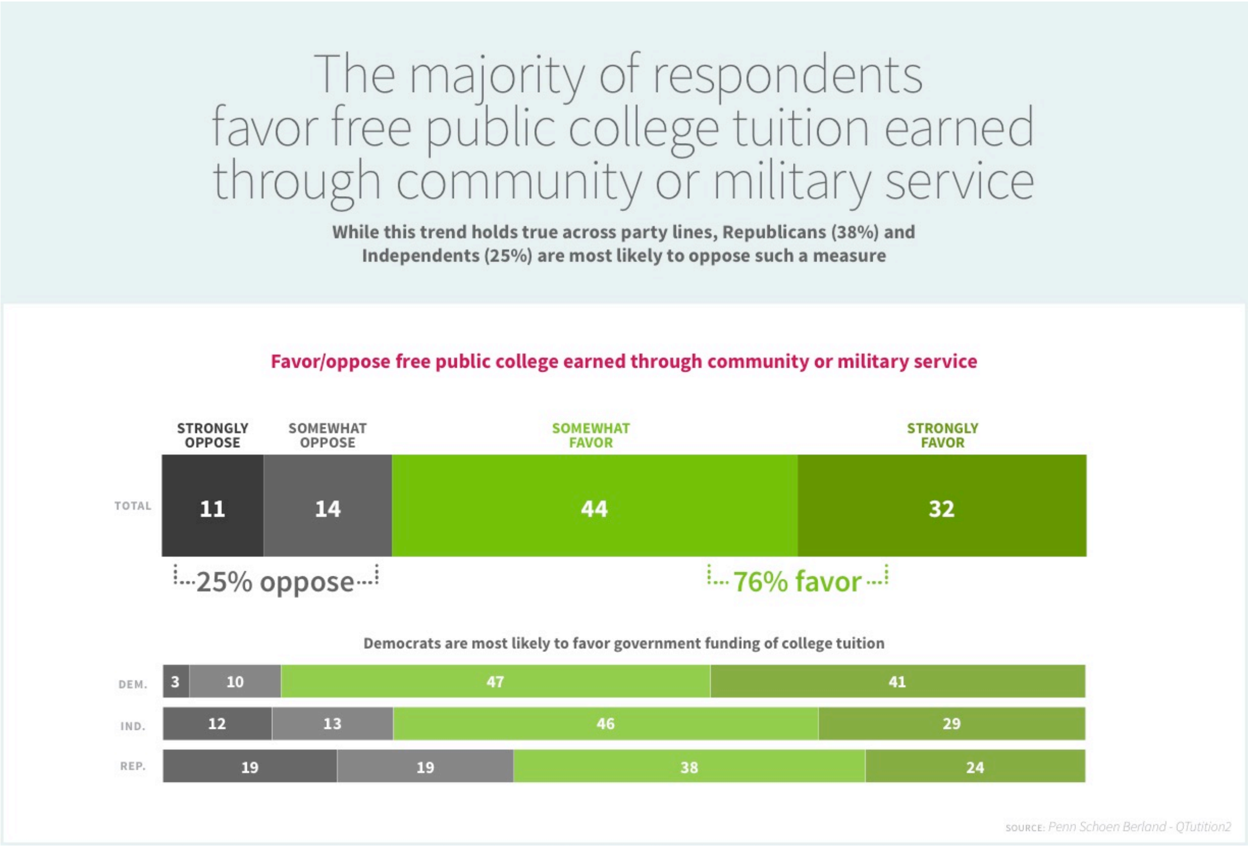
Chapter V —
Building Political Support for Promise Programs

The concept of making college tuition free enjoys wide bipartisan support, with Democratic and independent voters particularly enthusiastic. Polling also shows Republican voters support the concept depending on how it is designed and presented.

The Campaign for Free College Tuition's exclusive national polling found almost three-fourths of Democrats and Independents (74% and 73% respectively), as well as 45% of Republicans, agreed with the statement "free college tuition means many more young people could get the education and skills they need to compete for the high-tech jobs of the future." The numbers were reversed for the competing idea—"providing cost-free college will undermine the value of and commitment to higher education among our young people,"—when participants were asked to choose between the two. Overall 63% of those responding to our 800-person sample poll supported the idea of free college tuition.



Our polling suggested bipartisan support further increases when free college tuition is presented as a benefit recipients "earn" through some type of community or military service. A large majority of Republicans (62%) polled support such a program, along with most Independents (75%) and almost all (88%) Democrats.



A [poll done by the New America Foundation] confirmed CFCT's findings. The New America Foundation found 82% of Americans believe that in today's economy a post-secondary education is necessary to "having a secure job that pays well." And between 64% and 74% of respondents favored the idea of "debt free college" with the level of support depending on how much "skin in the game" students would have in order to get such an education. These findings reinforce the need for state Promise programs to include some "skin in the game" requirements, such as the eight hours of community service per term that Tennessee Promise scholars must perform, or Michigan's requirement that communities wishing to gain access to government matching funds must first demonstrate community support by raising initial seed money from private philanthropic donors.

The history of both Michigan Promise Zone communities and the Tennessee Promise provide another lesson on how to build support for free college tuition in a state. The Kalamazoo Promise was the first place-based scholarship program in the country. It was launched in 2005 thanks to the generous donations of local philanthropists who remain anonymous to this day. The announcement caught then Michigan Governor, Democrat Jennifer Granholm, by surprise. As excited as she was for the residents of Kalamazoo, she knew the program would soon generate requests for instituting such a program statewide. However, there was little support for such an idea in the Republican controlled legislature, which was intent upon finding more sustainable ways to fund existing state programs not add new ones. Nevertheless, Governor Granholm directed her staff to see if there was some way to respond to this new development on a statewide basis.

The result of the bargaining that followed was the Michigan Promise Zone legislation enacted in 2009, which is still in effect today. Promise Zones are local public-private partnerships that aim to make college free for every high school graduate to at least one institution for at least two years. Some have gone far beyond this threshold, offering full tuition at multiple college and universities. Ten promise-zone areas were originally authorized in some of the more impoverished communities in the state. Since then, eight of those zones have been able to establish local Promise programs ranging from the city of Detroit to the mostly rural communities in Baldwin County.

Another county-based Promise program, Tennessee Achieves, was also the inspiration for the Tennessee Promise. Its growth across multiple counties in the state prior to the enactment of the state's Promise program helped build popular and political support of the idea. With the mission of eliminating the barriers associated with entering the post-secondary pipeline, tnAchieves launched in 2008 as a universal last-dollar community and technical college scholarship that paired students with volunteer mentors and required the students to complete at least 8 hours of community service. From 2008 to 2014, tnAchieves supported more than 10,000 students. US Department of Education statistics showed students in the program stayed in college at a rate 50 percent higher than the state average and graduated at a rate three times above the state average. The results were especially impressive to policymakers since 65 percent of tnAchieves students were first generation college attendees and 70 percent came from families with annual incomes under $50,000. They certainly impressed Bill Haslam, then the Mayor of Knoxville, who leveraged the familiarity and success of tnAchieves to convince the state legislature to adopt his Tennessee Promise program when he became Governor. Both the Tennessee and Michigan Promise programs demonstrate the importance of leveraging successful community based Promise programs to build overall support for expanding the concept statewide.

This is not an iron-clad rule as there were no local Promise programs in Oregon when Senator Mark Hass led the charge to create the Oregon Promise. Instead, the Senator relied upon the excitement President Obama's proposal for free community colleges was generating in his state. In fact, when the idea was being debated Senator Hass even had President Obama call and convince members of the legislature who were on the fence, which helped solidify support for the program.

As the momentum for state Promise programs continues to build across the country they will help build support for the idea of free college, if for no other reason than to ensure a state remains competitive with states that enact Promise programs, both in attracting new businesses and new residents. As the country searches for ways to help communities left behind in an economy increasingly dependent on a skilled workforce, we expect making public colleges tuition free will gain even more political support from both sides of the aisle. Those who get ahead of the curve by tailoring a Promise program for their state and pushing for its adoption should find a door that readily opens.

Chapter VI —
Putting It All Together

A Three Step Process for Designing Your State's Promise Program

This briefing book is designed to help state policy makers think through the elements of making college tuition free so you can develop, and effectively implement, programs that can reap significant economic and societal benefits. We realize that each state has its own unique challenges, tax structures, higher education systems and political make up. So, while we have provided as many proven examples on different elements of what we believe will both justify the expenditures and prove to be politically popular, we have not attempted to provide a single, "model legislative proposal" or suggest there is only one path that states must follow to address the challenge of college affordability.

The purpose of this concluding chapter in the briefing book is to provide a guide for policy makers that will enable each one to make an informed decision on what should be included in their state's Promise program, considering all the variables that must be addressed to make the program effective.

Here are the steps we would recommend each state take to put together a program tailored to its fiscal and political environment.

STEP 1. Begin by gaining clarity on what goals you are trying to achieve by creating a Promise Program.

A great example of a clear policy goal that helped define and focus a state's program is the "Drive for 55" plan of Tennessee Governor Haslam. By making it clear that increasing the number of higher education trained workers in the state was the reason for the program, the Governor won support from the business community and other constituencies that might have otherwise questioned the expenditure of funds required to make their community colleges tuition free. Clear goals not only help generate support for the program they also greatly increase the effectiveness of the program's design as well. The following chart provides examples of the relationship between goals and program design for two different policy goals often associated with Promise programs.

Define Promise Program Goals and Design Policy Accordingly

Before designing the program and calculating costs, the strategy and need for the program must be defined.

PROGRAM GOAL	DESIGN LEVER	DESIGN LEVER IMPLICATION
Increasing access, affordability, and attainability of higher education	• Remove financial barrier • Increase capacity and productivity of HE institutions • Reduce HE costs	• Universal rather than need-based financial support • Lower residency requirements • Less restrictive eligibility constraints • Innovation incentives for colleges • Performance based HE funding
Increasing economic growth by upskilling workforce	• Create college going culture in K-12 • Improve public school quality • Focus community college funding on transfer degrees and career technical education	• Academic and mentoring support services in high school and college • Provide career pathways from HS through college • Wide array of post-secondary school options including private schools • Tighter residency requirements post-graduation • Less restrictive application time limits post HS • Support for adult learners seeking degree completion

Once the policy goal has been agreed upon, each design lever will need to be considered in the context of the funds available to pay for them and the political implications of each decision. Fortunately, Promise programs have demonstrated the ability to change outcomes at both the K-12 and college level, so that the same investment can be used to help achieve more than one goal if a state is reluctant to choose among them. Nevertheless, clarity of goals will help you decide which specific design levers you will want to pull.

By way of example, here are the questions that guided policy makers in Tennessee as they drafted their Promise program once the overall goal was agreed upon:

a. What is the Promise you are making?

b. To whom is the Promise being made? (traditional, non-traditional students, or both)

c. Who will provide the Promise?

d. What services will be included in the Promise?

e. What will the metrics of success be for the Promise?

f. How will the Promise be funded?

g. How will the Promise be diversified and sustained over time – financially, politically, and programmatically?

The next step in the process is to focus in on answering the latter two questions.

STEP 2. Compare your goals and policy design choices to the potential cost of implementing a system of free college tuition.

CFCT commissioned a report available on our website's Policy Resource Center designed to provide each state information on how to calculate the cost of making their colleges tuition free. The research, done by Mark Schneider of the American Institute for Research, who was formerly the director of the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), identifies the amount of revenue each state received in 2014 from tuition payments at both its four and two year colleges. It then adjusts that number to make an informed estimate of the revenue received in 2016. (You should verify the numbers for your state based on your own budget information.) His numbers calculate the revenue from in-state students for both incoming freshmen (Table 1) and for all undergraduate students (Table 2) so that you can make an estimate of how much it will cost in the first year and how much it would cost to fully implement the program for four years. The report then provides some additional information on potential additional costs if a given percentage of students transfer from private four year colleges (Table 3) or community colleges (Table 4). Again, you should make your own estimates of the dynamics of a Promise program based on the structure of your state's public and private higher education system.

There are two potential sources of money already in a state's higher education financial system that can be used to offset these costs. The first is Pell Grant revenue, which is currently the major federal program to provide money to students to cover the cost of tuition based on their family's financial need. If you decide to make your state's free college tuition program a "last dollar" program, then the money each student receives from Pell Grants will reduce the amount of tuition revenue "lost" by making your colleges tuition free. The current amount of Pell Grant revenue each state received in the 2012/2013 academic year can be found in Table 5 of the report. Keep in mind this amount is a function of how many students apply for Pell Grant money and then enroll in your state's colleges so it will change as your program impacts student enrollment and application for federal aid.

One of the keys to the success of the Tennessee Promise is their requirement that each applicant for a Tennessee Promise Scholarship must complete a FAFSA application for federal student aid. The University of Tennessee's Center for Business and Economic Research 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 the first year of the TN Promise more than 38,000 students filled out the FAFSA form. The state experienced the highest year over year gain in FAFSA completion and led the nation in the number of students filing for Pell Grants. Based on their experience, the normally stable amount of Pell Grant revenue flowing to your state could be adjusted based on your own estimates of the impact your Promise program will have on Pell Grant applications.

In year one of the Tennessee Promise program, the total cost to the state of Tennessee was approximately $15 million. With this relatively small investment, it is estimated that Tennessee added approximately 4,000 students into post-secondary education and improved its college-going rate (the percent of high school seniors who enroll in college immediately following graduation) by 5-6 percentage points. Comparing Fall 2014 (prior to Tennessee Promise) to Fall 2015 (after implementation), first-time freshman enrollment increased 24.7 percent at community colleges, 20 percent at colleges of applied technology and 10.1 percent overall across Tennessee's public higher education sector.

The other potential source of existing revenue to offset the cost of making tuition free is state and/or private college scholarship programs that currently exist. Some states such as Washington, Louisiana, and California have robust systems for providing grants to students based on need or family income. This money, as in the case of Tennessee's Education Lottery Programs, can be aligned with the state's Promise program to reduce the amount of new revenue that is needed. It is therefore important to properly identify the amount of state aid currently being provided and how a Promise program might impact those expenditures.

However, there are arguments against taking this step. Advocates, such as Sara Goldrick-Rab, point out that the cost of attending college is not limited to tuition and therefore scholarship money should not be used to offset the cost of a free tuition program but instead continue to be given to the student to help offset those costs. This is an important policy choice that should be made in the context of each state's unique fiscal and political environment. Oregon, responded to this argument by having the Oregon Promise pay a minimum $1000 benefit for student whose tuition is fully covered by a Pell Grant.

Finally, the cost of a Promise program can be further reduced by adding requirements that will ultimately lessen the number of students eligible to receive the Promise program "scholarship." It is important to keep in mind that these requirements reduce the cost of a Promise program by reducing the number of students who can apply, potentially working at cross purposes to your overall goal. They also can quickly become the subject of political debate.

Still, academic requirements, particularly high school grade point averages, or residency requirements, such as how long the student or family has resided in the state, are not uncommon. Other requirements, such as requiring community service or working in the state upon graduation, are often included to make sure students have some "skin in the game" and don't simply get the benefit without doing anything to earn it. Many of the political debates surrounding free college tuition have focused on these types of requirements.

The other major requirement that will spark a great deal of debate is whether the program should be universal, as is a state's support for K-12 education, or only available to students from families with a certain level of income. Universal programs tend to generate more political support and therefore are more sustainable over time. However, universality can make the program a target for those who don't want to subsidize the education of rich families' children, even though they sometimes do a better job of reducing inequality. Oregon addressed this issue and the question of skin in the game by making their Promise program universal AND requiring every student to pay $50 toward their tuition. Policy makers should anticipate that eligibility requirements will occupy a great deal of the political debate over the program and be prepared to provide an estimate of the fiscal impact of each requirement on overall costs.

STEP 3. Once you have decided how much your Promise Program will cost, it's important to turn your attention to making the program as effective as possible in achieving your goal and delivering the expected return on the investment.

In this briefing book, we have provided information on a series of proven strategies to make sure those who enroll in free college complete their studies and become productive members of the state's workforce. While each state will need to determine how many support services and success strategies it wants to implement and can afford, we strongly recommend at a minimum that the Promise program legislation address the issues of college readiness and preparation, mentoring, and counseling at both the high school and college level, and some form of performance based incentives for all schools. Coupled with effective marketing strategies to ensure students and families know the benefits a state Promise program offers, these additional strategies will help ensure your Promise program enjoys the success it will need to have to ensure its popularity.

A Promise is More than Money

EARLY OUTREACH

So students and parents, especially lower income families, can understand that cost will not be an obstacle to college attendance.

MENTORSHIP

Including outreach to high school students that continues through completion.

MEANINGFUL REMEDIATION

States and/or school districts offer meaningful educational remediation for students not college ready.

HOLD SCHOOLS ACCOUNTABLE

Create higher but reasonable expectation of schools themselves, including high schools and community colleges.

Once you have agreed on eligibility requirements and support services, you will then need to compare the estimated costs of your policy design with available revenue. It is inevitably an iterative process. To help with those discussions, here is an example of a summary of the type of policy choices you will need to consider:

Promise Program Policy Options

DESIGN PRINCIPLE	DESIGN PARAMETER	RATIONALE
Academic	No requirement such as GPA or SAT score other than acceptance into applicable university/college	Current scope includes those first entering higher education. Not adult, GED or continuing education
Eligibility	All seniors graduating from a public high school enrolling in college within one year of graduation	Must enroll immediately or within one year of graduation
FAFSA	Yes	Determines Middle Dollar award based on funding gap. Is an “equal” approach, not “equity”
Applicability (Institutions)	Applies to degree-seeking programs at state universities and community colleges	Application of state dollars must be at public institutions
Applicability (Degree Application)	• Funds can be applied for up to three years or until the attainment of an Associates degree, whichever comes first; ***OR*** • Funds can be applied for up to six years or until the attainment of a Bachelors degree, whichever comes first. • Time spent away in an active military role or federally-recognized service organization does not count against eligibility period	• Completion-focus results in applicability period of 150% of traditional degree time, thus controlling for remediation and other personal and educational delays • Monetary cap is not explicit. Implied cap at max tuition and fees for time allotted
Need Based	No	Need-based funding is addressed through FAFSA and institutional based aid opportunities
Total Costs v. Tuition and Fees Only	Tuition and Fees only (not room and board, books, transportation, etc.)	Limits exposure and cost
Last Dollar/First Dollar/Middle Dollar	Middle Dollar	Reduces cost. In comparison to First Dollar models, and distributes funds based on award gap need. Gives students and their families some “skin in the game”
Residency	Must be continuous attendance **K-12** 100% scholarship money **5-12** 85% scholarship **6-12** 80% scholarship **7-12** 65% scholarship **10-12** 50% scholarship **12 only** not eligible	Promotes increased enrollment in public schools, with most benefits for K12 enrollees
College student performance requirements	Maintain in good academic standing as defined by the university. Usually mandates: • Maintain a 2.0 GPA • Maintain full-time status (12 semester hours minimum course load per semester or the equivalent)	These align with standards of university or college for students to retain “good standing” status
Support Services	Must be included. Options include: • **Secondary —** *Examples:* Math skills program in high school (TN); Future centers for college advisor, college application and FAFSA supports (CO); SAT/ACT and college preparatory courses (AR); Say Yes to Education (NY); SAILS (TN) • **Post-Secondary —** *Examples:* Dedicated academic supports on every partner campus (CO); Student success centers for mentoring and advising (NY); Bright Prospects (CA); ASAP CUNY	Based on lessons from other programs, supports should be built in on the front end to support student success and program requirements. TN saved $5M by moving remedial education to high school in math alone. Estimated costs are around 2.3M/yr with a focus on high school remediation and application support programs

For any questions you may have about the process of designing a state Promise program, please contact the Campaign for Free College Tuition and be sure and review all the resources included in this book.

CONTACT US

Appendix I-III Introduction

Even though most discussions about Promise programs focus on the powerful guarantee of free college tuition, the experience of other states and communities demonstrates that most successful programs have a well thought out plan to support students who qualify for the benefit all the way through their college career. In short, a Promise program is about more than money. It is about making sure students who receive the benefit are prepared for college and given appropriate counseling so they have a greater chance to enroll and complete post-secondary education. In designing your own state's Promise program, the following examples of successful "wraparound" services should be considered to assure the success of both Promise students and the program itself.

Appendix I — Mentoring: The Tennessee Promise's Secret to Success

Mentoring

The best example of an effective statewide mentoring program is in Tennessee. The program pairs all applicants with mentors to assist student in eliminating the barriers associated with post-secondary access and success. To this end, tnAchieves, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, currently serves as the partnering organization in 85 of the state's 95 counties. They have established county-based advisory councils comprised of local higher education, secondary education and business leaders as well as public officials to ensure local ownership and sustainability; recruited and trained over 7,500 mentors annually since the establishment of the Tennessee Promise; and established summer bridge programs for students requiring remediation. The success of their public/private partnership demonstrates that such services can be provided with minimal costs to the state.

Mentors serve three roles: resource, taskmaster, and encourager. The mentor plays the role of trusted resource when the student has questions and/or encounters a barrier to post-secondary entry. The role of taskmaster is also incredibly important as the program seeks to ease the transition from high school to college. Ensuring students understand the critical nature of deadlines is essential to the mentor's role. Finally, students often face difficulties as they attempt to break family cycles. The role of encourager is invaluable to these students' success.

Recruiting

tnAchieves forms partnerships with the business community to engage its employees to serve as mentors, particularly in metropolitan areas. In 2015, 35 percent of mentors came from business/industry. TnAchieves also recruits mentors from civic clubs and professional/trade associations. Finally, tnAchieves recruits many current educators and education administrators who are comfortable working with students. The post-secondary institution mentors also provide a familiar face on campus during the critical first months of college.

Throughout the mentor recruitment process, tnAchieves updates its various stakeholders at least bi-weekly. Mentor recruitment begins in June and continues through November with hundreds of events scheduled to share the opportunity.

Training

Randy Boyd, the head of Tennessee's Department of Economic and Community Development underlined the importance of their non-profit partners training of each mentor, "Mentors receive high-level information about filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), completing the post-secondary admissions process and all other Tennessee Promise requirements and deadlines. Each mentor is also provided a 50-page handbook that outlines the process and provides insight on working with the target population…The handbook includes a specific outline for their bi-weekly communication with students."

Mentor/Student Interaction

Tennessee Promise mentors are asked for a one-year commitment of 10 hours, working with 5 to 10 students from the high school of their choice. Mentors and students work together from March of a student's senior year of high school through their first semester of college. Mentors and students attend two structured meetings and communicate at least twice per month. Many mentors and students build a stronger bond and continue working together throughout the student's college career.

The first mentor meeting is in the spring of the students' final semester of high school. The meeting topics include the admissions process, community service, FAFSA and the summer bridge program. At this meeting, mentors and students work on a goal-setting activity. Each student's goal for this activity is the same: college completion. Mentors work with students to create short-term goals and identify opportunities and obstacles that they may face in the process of achieving their goals.

The second meeting occurs in October of the students' first semester of college. The meeting focuses on being a successful college student, available resources, college requirements, transferring and graduating. At this meeting, mentors and students work on a time management activity, mapping out their schedules and intentionally discussing more school/study time.

Communication between students and mentors can be challenging. tnAchieves helps mentors understand successful methods of reaching students. Many students have never had an adult take an active interest in them before, and this new relationship can take time to build. tnAchieves asks mentors to communicate with students every two weeks to build a relationship and ensure students know there is a consistent voice invested in their future.

tnAchieves also encourages mentors to contact the students' parents/guardians to introduce themselves and explain the role they will be playing. Often, the mentor becomes as much of a resource for parents/guardians as they collectively assist the student in navigating the process. Mentors receive a weekly email from tnAchieves every Monday, outlining details/deadlines to share with students. The program wants to ensure that mentors remember to regularly communicate with students but also that the information provided is accurate. Monday mentor emails also include inspiring student stories as well as tips from other mentors. Mentors are placed into teams of four to six and receive one another's contact information from tnAchieves for additional support. Mentor teams are seated together at the meetings with their students to work together through the activities, assist each other in answering student questions, and ensure students are on track to succeed.

This summary of Tennessee's mentoring program underlines the scope of the effort required and makes clear the importance of having private sector partners to manage this critical process.

Appendix II — K12 and Post-Secondary Support Services: The Kalamazoo Promise Experience

Most existing local and state Promise programs are in some fashion modeled after the first place-based scholarship program established in Kalamazoo, MI through the generosity of anonymous donors. There is much to celebrate about The Kalamazoo Promise, but the lessons for states and communities are clear: scholarships are only one of several components needed to foster student success and to achieve the ultimate outcome goals of the state/community.

According to former Kalamazoo Public Schools Superintendent, and current Kalamazoo Promise Trustee, Janice Brown, “when The Kalamazoo Promise was announced in 2005, it did not take long for the city and its people to realize what a tremendous responsibility they had been given to ensure the success of Promise scholars. Organizations and individuals step up time and again, and still there is much work to do. One of the most challenging aspects of support continues to be community alignment-getting the community institutions and organizations to embrace common goals and accountabilities for youth success.”

CFCT asked Janice Brown to author the following paper on K-12 and post-secondary support services that states, communities, school systems and post-secondary institutions may want to provide to ensure their scholars success. On the state level, governors, legislators and state higher education executive officers examining tuition-free college may want to simultaneously determine what support services are currently being offered in the state and identify regional and community partners willing to scale successful interventions in partnership with state government.

A Case for Comprehensive Youth Services

Written by Janice Brown, Kalamazoo Promise Trustee

Although this paper relies on research and experience from several sources of Promise programs around the country, it primarily discusses what has been collectively learned over the past eleven years working in Kalamazoo, Michigan with The Kalamazoo Promise. In effect, it is a case study about The Kalamazoo Promise and the wide range of supports that are critical to student success.

Starting from birth, through elementary, high school and college and into the workforce, there are many factors to consider while building youth support systems. This paper will examine some of those factors; the discussion exemplifies the complexity of successful Promise programs and the intensive and ongoing work that is needed by communities to ensure student success.

Often, the term “place-based” is used to explain how the work is being done. Communities are gathering expertise from government, education, non-profits, foundations, healthcare and business at the local level to collaborate around successful strategies and programs.

Although federal and state programs accelerate implementation and provide the needed resources, it is the community members that make the decisions about purposeful goals and ongoing support for student success.

The support system for Promise students' needs to begin as early as birth and be based on individual needs along a continuum of services until a student is job ready. This type of support system illustrates the importance of a comprehensive, integrated data system to keep track of each student and the services they require. Beginning at birth, children can benefit from an individualized development plan (IDP) – a comprehensive view of a child's condition historically and currently in terms of physical, social emotional and cognitive characteristics and needs. These needs are coupled with the intersection of resources and strategies that can be used in a proactive way to support growth and development in each domain.

Communities build systems of support and tackle difficult issues; from infant mortality and teen-age pregnancy, to in-home family support service and early learning programs. Using statistical data on cities, counties and areas served, often pulled from the census, communities identify neighborhoods where high risk factors are more prevalent and more intensive services are needed. Community leaders and their organizations develop comprehensive plans to support families in distress and work towards understanding and major social issues such as food insecurity, housing, physical and mental health, government services and education to develop prevention strategies. The collaborative planning tables include leaders from non-profit agencies, foundations, government agencies, education, mental and physical health and families as they offer insight to the issues and practical ideas for resolution.

Early Development and Learning

Individualized Development Plans (IDP) for children are established at birth in Kalamazoo. Birth records provided by hospitals are used to visit new families in homes and more than thirty Family-Partner workers visit weekly to offer service and support rather than judgment. Following the nationally validated curriculum "Parents as Teachers", workers come from their neighborhoods, are familiar to families, and work hard to develop trusting relationship so that institutions can be navigated and families in need can get the support that is available and needed. Parent advocates can establish children's needs using the IDP and match community services to them. The plan remains flexible and current as the needs of the child evolve.

Early childhood programming is often focused on the development of pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs; there are numerous communities in the United States that have identified quality pre-K programs as a universal goal. And in these discussions, correlation is drawn between high quality pre-k, success to and through college and higher earnings for participants as they enter the workforce. In his book, Investing in Kids: Early Childhood Programs and Local Economic Development, Timothy J. Bartik (2011) builds a strong practical and economic based case for pre-K. He states, “Local economic development strategies in the United States should include extensive investments in high-quality early childhood programs such as pre-K.” He goes on to point out that the Pew Charitable Trust (2001) found support for early childhood programs is enhanced by clear evidence of business and economic benefits—increased jobs and earnings for local residents. The book builds a strong case for pre-k, sighting research, graphics, statistics and other factual information about the benefit to local communities that build strong pre-K programs. But Bartik also acknowledges that early kindergarten programs create challenges because of the long-term nature of the economic development benefits and describes it as a political handicap. When local and state politicians think in terms of their 4-year terms, it is difficult to sustain an effort that can take as much as 18 or more years before participants enter the work force and communities reap the benefit. In spite of this factor, communities are often coupling universal pre-K with free college as part of their overall community transformation strategy for youth.

K-12 Support

The public-school system has the advantage of a captive audience of students and it is logical that systems of support for serving students be placed as much as possible in the schools. There are countless barriers that impede student progress, even though every child should have the right to a child-centered system that supports their growth and development. For years, educators have been strapped with the responsibilities of the physical, social, emotional and academic needs of students and have been explicitly trained in one factor—to educate children. Despite this, over the past ten years, Kalamazoo Public Schools has implemented several highly successful strategies that have been moving results in the right direction. The school district has grown by 24%, achievement scores are up, the number of students taking AP courses has grown 150%, and the dropout rate is down. Since the announcement of The Kalamazoo Promise, the school district has built three new schools supported by three bonds totaling $209 million, three enhancement millage renewals and a special education millage increase.

But no school district should tackle these complex issues alone. Children deserve to be served by their entire community, and it is often forgotten that they are in school only about 12% or less of their formative years. Through collaboration, accountability and alignment, groups can move to eliminate the barriers that get in the way of a child’s learning. Communities in Schools (CIS), of Kalamazoo is implemented in 20 schools in Kalamazoo, Michigan and has as its mission bringing direct service to students based on their needs. CIS of Kalamazoo "overcomes the barriers that derail kids, giving them hope and the belief that they can succeed in school, graduate and be prepared for life." It is affiliated with a national network of 200 state and local CIS affiliates. CIS Kalamazoo has often been credited, in partnership with the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) for helping students graduate and become a Promise scholar.

The design is simple; place a site coordinator at each school who meets regularly with teachers and administrators to access the needs and determine the services that are going to be most effective for the development of the whole child. After it is decided what the student needs, site coordinators bring in partner agencies and individual volunteers that specialize in the needed service. Whether it is dental, healthcare, mental health, clothing, food, mentoring, tutoring or a host of other services, this child-centered approach is vastly different than a single non-profit seeking to support kids. It is a shift in partnership from a "you need me" to a full-scale service delivery system based upon the child's needs. It assumes that all children have multiple developmental needs and that the needs change on an ongoing basis. And there is a significant accountability associated with CIS Kalamazoo; the data from Kalamazoo Public Schools is the measure of each student's success. Called an Integrated Student Services Model, the annual evaluation measures student success based on reading, mathematics, behavior, and attendance.

In addition to the daily support students receive from CIS Kalamazoo, there is also an extensive after-school program funded by the Michigan Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers (federal funding). Managed by CIS Kalamazoo eleven elementary and four middle schools can extend the learning day and for six weeks in the summer. Students can get the homework help they need, a variety of supports, experiences and personal relationships with adults that can change their lives. According to the America's Promise Alliance which has a focus on drop-out prevention, relationships matter. In a research study by Boston University (2015) "too many young people are facing too many hurdles to graduation with too little help". Further, they found that young people are far more likely to graduate if they have access to someone who is their anchor along with a web of support. With CIS in Kalamazoo it includes supporting students as they move through the grade-level continuum.

The "web of support" that underserved students need is complex, difficult and often under-funded. But systems that have a framework that support the whole child and their many needs are far more beneficial for them. Based on national, state and local research, students served by CIS and other community school-based organizations have a better chance, and in the case of Kalamazoo, they are in a far better position to be college-ready. Lisbeth Morales, a Kalamazoo Promise scholar, sums it up beautifully, “Your race, color or past doesn’t determine what kind of capability you have within yourself. Any put downs or mistakes made should be seen as an opportunity to grow and learn…CIS has been there to help me and other students to continue and finish strong.”

Other Supports, K-12

At the secondary education level, other supports that help students who are college-bound are worth noting, especially those who are underrepresented or first-generation college students. Soon after The Kalamazoo Promise was announced, Superintendent Michael F. Rice convened a group of educators to define, “a college-going culture” for the district. This information has been widely publicized, taught by teachers from K-12, and shared annually with parents and guardians. It is engrained in the fabric of the district and has been critical in raising expectations, giving student’s purpose and direction and creating full awareness of the opportunity and expectation that all students will attend and complete college.

One issue for students is how they can get the information, applications, other scholarships and support they need to get accepted into college. Through the College and Career Access Network (CACAN) in Kalamazoo, significant increases have been made in completion of the FAFSA as well as providing access to other scholarship opportunities. Supported by the Michigan and National College Access Network, plans are developed at the local level where students can access support in the schools (often at centers based in the school), in their neighborhoods and in churches and other neighborhood organizations. Financial advising, application processes, visitations, other scholarship applications, etc. are often a part of this support. Sometimes current college students share their experiences so students know what to expect. College access programs can systematically bring high school students through the complex process of financial aid, application, expectations, and selection of the college that best meets the needs of the student’s aspirations and talents.

Promise communities are just now beginning to understand the need for career and vocational opportunities for students of all ages. Beginning with career awareness in elementary school and moving to career exploration in the middle years, culminating in career observation and experience in high school and college, business partners play a significant role in exposing students to jobs now and in the future. Several internship opportunities are now available for Promise scholars throughout the United States. Motivated by the national emphasis of jobs available in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas, and the needs of local businesses for specific job skills, business leaders’ work with communities to target jobs available and get students exposed to those opportunities. Community colleges have also been significant partners in this area as their relationship with business, manufacturing and other trade and certificate programs is long established.

Post-Secondary Support

It would be easy to say, community college and university students need the same support as students in K-12 do, and that is generally correct. The problem with this solution is that it is simplistic; there are several unique variables that need to be considered for greater student success/degree completion. As Promise programs expand throughout the United States, many community colleges are responding; providing support and resources to increase credential and degree attainment based upon several factors that make every student unique. These include:

1. Self-supporting students; some are supporting other family members or siblings and their own families.
2. Adult learners, who are working at part-time or full-time.
3. Marginalized students who are often first-generation college attendees and do not have the support system that is needed for success.
4. Underrepresented students who often find themselves underprepared and under-informed about college and the academic and social factors needed for success.

Once enrolled, all students, but especially underserved individuals, need access to support services. Post-secondary institutions are beginning to expand student services and provide financial, academic, personal, social, and career services to their students to ensure that they are developing whole students. Additionally, many colleges are tailoring these services to particular groups of students—veterans, first generation students, learners with disabilities, and students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds. Perhaps the greatest difference for colleges that have traditionally offered some of these supports is that these services are effectively integrated together and include them as core components of a comprehensive system of support. Examples of nationally recognized initiatives and examples of their work include:

- The City University of New York (CUNY) has created an accelerated study program to address the challenge of remedial education student success. Community college students are provided with financial, academic and personal supports. There are many services offered based on student need—advising, academic and career counseling, tutoring, tuition waivers, transportation, and financial support for textbooks. The model has also been successfully imported into three community colleges in Ohio.

- The Tacoma College Housing Assistance Program in Washington provides three-year rental assistance for students who attend college full-time and find themselves unable to afford housing.
- Lee College in Texas partners with 10 local school districts to align the high school and college curriculum. The college also places advisors in the partnering high schools and hosts professional development workshops for teachers.
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College rebuilt and centralized its student support and renamed it the Student Success Center. Struggling Promise scholars are required to get an advocate to help them determine the support they need and follow up with them to assure the supports are in place and effective.
- Bunker Hill Community College in Massachusetts created the Summer Transition Program; it helps students enroll in college-level courses as soon as possible. The program provides free boot camps and eight-week bridge courses.

Academic Preparation

Many students enter college less prepared than their middle-class peers. For example, on average, white high school seniors score over 20 points higher than Latino students on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) mathematics test, a standardized assessment given to a sample of students nationwide. The results are similar for reading scores-a 22 point achievement gap has been consistently reported.

The traditional solution by colleges is to ask underprepared students to enroll in developmental courses before they begin to take college level courses. Some students make take multiple “remedial” courses to improve their skill level. Because community colleges are open-access they serve a disproportionate amount of academically underprepared students; as many as 52 percent of all entering community college students are placed into remediation. Unfortunately, these courses are required to enroll in college-level courses and do not contribute toward a student’s progress toward a degree or credential. Despite its intention to help students succeed in college, research shows that developmental education is a barrier to completion.

As a result, many community colleges are developing programs and support services that accelerate learning and avoid the trap of remedial education. At Kalamazoo Valley Community College in Kalamazoo, Michigan remedial English classes are being combined with the college level classes. For students needing extra support and help a student tutor is hired and placed into the course. Students are required to meet with their classroom tutor once a week outside of class to get support for leaning and homework. In mathematics, the courses are not combined, but the tutor is required and the student accelerates their own learning through supplemental on-line programs that are offered to them. Other colleges offer summer transition programs that work on preparation and expectation in college and some community colleges bring these programs to the local high school. Community colleges throughout the nation are experimenting with programs and services that better meet the needs of students and streamline the developmental education process.

Accountability and Leadership

Leaders at the community college level see increases in student completion as a high priority. And they understand those increases come from a group of students that are traditionally underserved and whose many needs have traditionally not been met. College presidents who assign senior level leaders and vice-presidents to these programs and have them report results are making the greatest progress. Understanding that these new initiatives require flexibility and change to improve success for students is part of the equation; they are driven by data and by student results. And college presidents who know how to align resources go after new dollars and create teams dedicated to design and new initiatives that work will see the results in student completion.

Educational institutions that collaborate with other community programs help fulfill their goal to make higher education accessible to all students in their communities. One of the best examples of collaboration is the Long Beach College Promise. Established in 2008, the Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College and California State University Long Beach developed a partnership to prepare students for college. Formalized through a memorandum of understanding that defined the goals of the partnership each institution committed to specific services. Leaders at these institutions keep their own institutions accountable to the College Promise by the memorandum, annual reports and cost sharing. Each year, the initiative releases a report to the community; the mayor and city officials in Long Beach are strong supporters of the Long Beach Promise.

Research and Evaluation

The success of Promise programs relies heavily on the providers to use data to show how retention and graduation can be improved. The Kalamazoo Promise keeps multiple data points on every student and research results are reported regularly by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. The Pittsburgh Promise is consistently evaluated by the University of Pittsburgh and the El Dorado Promise by the University of Arkansas. The results of these research studies help improve not only these Promise programs; the results are shared freely throughout the country for other start up and established programs for the purpose of program improvement. While the timeline for many of these programs is short; the results have been impressive. More students than ever are going to college, completing college, and more institutions than ever are concerned with the right goals-making good on the promise of college that will lead to a degree or credential as well as future success in the job market.

Conclusion

The national movement to increase college completion is an exciting concept that has swept the country. With more than 100 communities and four states identified as offering some type of free college tuition, Promise programs are leading this effort. This movement has pushed communities to deliberate and implement support systems along a continuum for students from birth to and through college and into the workforce. These supports, delivered through a variety of community-based resources, help institutions eliminate achievement gaps and help support the growth and develop needs of the diverse student populations that they serve. Acknowledging the vast array of support that is provided throughout the country, this paper is intended to serve as one example and provide the reader with ideas and concepts for further study.

Appendix III — Aligning Community Resources: Say Yes to Education, Buffalo, NY

One of the most successful, large scale community efforts to provide wraparound support services for students receiving free college tuition is occurring in Buffalo, New York, under the guidance of Say Yes to Education, a 501(c)(3) non-profit. To provide additional insights on the level of collaboration and cooperation required to make such programs successful, please see a case study authored by authored by Robert Frahm and published by Grantmakers for Education here.

Appendix IV-V Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Open Education Resources (OER) can both be incorporated in state programs that make college tuition free to reduce cost, enhance effectiveness and/or provide additional benefits to residents.

Companies of all shapes and sizes are moving beyond the traditional concepts of "charitable giving" and implementing powerful, meaningful, and deeply ingrained Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs that are creating social impact and improving lives in big ways. This trend creates an opportunity for state leaders to work with their leading corporations in support of free college tuition initiatives.

Similarly, states, schools, and faculty are turning to Open Education Resources (OER) to address the rising cost of textbooks. As a 2013 survey research shows, many students are not purchasing required books/materials because of cost. High quality OER materials, which are distributed freely with legal permission to use, share and build upon the content, can help students achieve as good or better grades and course completion rates.

Appendix IV — Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

This new trend towards large scale CSR is already manifesting itself in ways that are helping make college tuition free in America.

Starbucks' College Achievement Program (SCAP) is among the largest and most successful examples of this. Introduced in 2014, the program creates an opportunity for eligible U.S. partners (Starbucks Employees) to earn bachelor's degrees with full tuition reimbursement. Starbucks is committed to helping at least 25,000 partners graduate from Arizona State University (ASU) through one of its more than 60 online undergraduate degree programs by 2025. There are currently more than 6,300 participating partners. There is no commitment to stay with Starbucks after graduation and partners can pursue any degree.

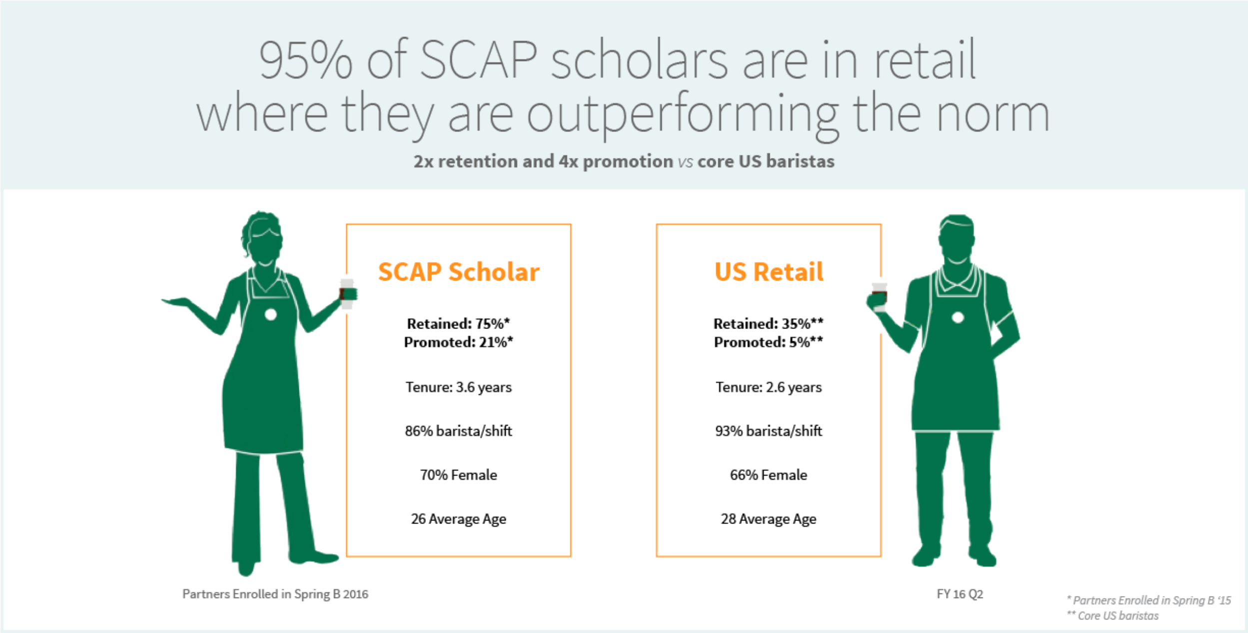
So far, 229 partners have earned their degree with another 211 current applications for December 2016 graduation. Starbucks estimates that by the end of 2017 about 1,000 of their employees will have graduated through this program. The Starbucks College Achievement Program's innovative model is an authentic and meaningful effort by a company to help young people achieve the dream of earning a degree and should be used as an example for other companies to follow.

There is no reason not to approach leading corporations in your state and suggest they follow Starbucks lead in this area. At the very least, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that they should be open to a conversation about how they can help with your state's proposed Promise program.

A recent annual *Business and Politics* report by the research and public affairs firm Global Strategy Group found that in 2015:

- 8 of 10 Americans believe that corporations should take action to address important issues facing society, and an even higher number (88%) believe that corporations have the power to influence social change;
- Nearly 90% of Americans say that they would be more willing to purchase a product with a social benefit, a feeling that is particularly pronounced among millennials. 95% of millennials say they would switch to/pay more for brands that support a good cause;
- 75% of Americans say they would be happier to work for a company with a strong CSR program and 74% are likely to seek out employment at a company that has been publicly awarded for its ethics. Not surprisingly, this feeling is even more pronounced among millennials (82%);
- More than 8 of 10 millennials expect companies to make a public commitment to good corporate citizenship.

Furthermore, demonstrating a company's commitment to their social responsibility is becoming an increasingly important strategy to build market share and retain employees. Starbucks, for instance, has found that employees who participate in their College Achievement Program are twice as likely to continue to work for them. Companies are finding that CSR programs benefit their bottom line because they are a great way to engage consumers, employees and other stakeholders.



Here are some ideas on how state policy makers can take advantage of this trend:

- **Making college tuition free for employees and their families** – Companies can create programs and/or endowments that pay for college tuition, allowing qualified employees to earn their degrees by either attending classes part-time at a local community or state college or by taking leaves of absence to complete their full-time education. Companies could extend the benefits to include family members of employees, namely their children. These types of programs could be brought to scale through partnerships with local education institutions and governments that could help companies conceptualize their programs. If a state creates the type of Dynamic Endowment Fund (DEF) described in Chapter IV, it becomes the perfect vehicle for companies to become involved financially in a state Promise program.

- **Invest in local community Promise programs** – Community Promise programs that pay for part or all tuition expenses for qualified students are popping up all over the country. These programs often rely on the generosity of private benefactors for support. Corporate dollars could play an outsized roll in sustaining and drastically expanding community Promise programs thereby building a foundation of support for a statewide effort in the future.

- **Partner with government and education institutions to help raise awareness among K-12 families on the importance of going to college** – Students from families that make plans for their child to attend college early in life have a higher rate of college enrollment than those who don't. Helping families understand the importance of college planning, identifying college affordability programs that can help with costs, even helping to fund Children Savings Accounts as Salesforce.com's CEO has done in Oakland, CA, are all ways that companies could help create a college going culture, which is the ultimate goal of any Promise program.

- **Support mentorship programs –** Companies can partner with government and educational institutions to develop and launch mentorship programs that help students at all levels manage the burdens of college. As described in Chapter VI, the mentoring program for Tennessee's Promise program is mostly run by a non-profit who partners with leading employers to help recruit the thousands of mentors the program requires. One observer commented wryly that by the time tnAchieves was done recruiting mentors, every employee of FedEx would be serving as a mentor to at least one high school student in the state.

- **Create a customized solution that fits the needs of your state** – CSR programs are often custom tailored to the place where a company operates. This is especially true when it comes to technical training at a local community college which often tailor programs to the needs of local employers. States can create incentives for such partnerships through innovation grants or tax credits and ask companies in return to provide scholarships and other financial support for a program, which is in effect training their workers for free.

CSR programs come in many shapes and sizes and the unique way in which your state and your corporate partners tackle the challenge of college affordability may just become the next big innovation in higher education reform.

Appendix V — Leveraging Open Education Resources (OER)

The rising cost of higher education is about more than just tuition. Students face a multitude of expenses that can impact their ability to afford their degree. Textbook costs have emerged as a major contributing factor. The College Board estimates the cost of books and supplies to be $1,250 at four-year public institutions and $1,390 at two-year public institutions. Textbook retail prices have risen 88% over the last decade – faster than tuition and fees. Recent studies have found this has a negative impact on students. About two out of every three students report that they skip buying some of their required materials because of costs, despite many who believe doing so could harm their grades.

Open Educational Resources as a Solution

States, schools and faculty are working to solve this problem by replacing expensive, traditional textbooks with open educational resources (OER). OER are high quality educational materials that are distributed freely with legal permission to use, share and build upon the content. OER are created through a variety of models including start-up companies, non-profit publishers, and the work of individual scholars. Complete open textbooks are available for many of the highest enrollment courses already. Use of these materials has proven not only to reduce costs, but also help students achieve as good or better grades and course completion rates.

Leveraging OER to Reduce Costs

State and system leaders can take meaningful actions to reduce or eliminate college textbook costs through OER. Nearly half of all states have adopted some form of program or policy to support the creation, adoption, or curation of OER. Cases where states have invested funding in OER programs have resulted in an exponential return on investment – something rare in higher education. While it will always be the right of individual faculty to select how they teach their courses, much can be done to provide support to faculty who are interested in using affordable, effective OER.

High-Level Endorsements

One of the biggest barriers with OER is raising awareness. While high quality OER are available across many subjects, many faculty and students remain unaware that it is an option. A strong, visible statement made by a governor, top-level administrator, or state agency can direct tremendous attention to an issue.

> *Example: Rhode Island*
> In the fall of 2016, Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo issued a challenge to the state's higher education institutions to save students $5 million over 5 years through the use of open textbooks. The announcement brought more than half of RI's institutions to the table, and within the first two months the initiative has already begun saving students money.

Task Forces

Some states have created a task force or consortium to lead OER work. Task forces can be beneficial because they bring many institutions to the table, and allow the work to be guided by the stakeholders it will affect. Creation of a task force can be accomplished through state appropriations, authorizing legislation, or a resolution.

> *Example: Connecticut*
> In 2015, Connecticut passed legislation creating a task force of faculty, administrators, and students. With a combination of a state appropriation and private funding, the University of Connecticut was able to introduce open textbooks on campus. The University Libraries surveyed faculty about the use of open textbooks, created online workshops for faculty development, and adapted an existing general chemistry textbook. It is estimated that Connecticut students will save more than $1 million per school year.

System-Wide Initiatives

Part of the value of OER is that once created, these resources can be shared and used by other institutions. College and university systems have therefore found success in coordinating initiatives. Support and strategic guidance from the system level can help guide effective local action.

Example: North Dakota
The North Dakota University System launched a multi-pronged initiative to encourage OER creation and use at public institutions within the state. This included the adoption of OER policy language in the system's strategic plan, a rigorous survey evaluating faculty awareness and interests in OER, professional development for faculty, and – with support through a $110,000 appropriation from the state legislature – grants to faculty members who want to begin using OER. The initiative has already saved students and estimated $2 million, and by 2018 is expected to save students $4-5 million *per year*.

State-Led Initiatives

States themselves can lead initiatives, working through agencies or government offices. This can include activities similar to system-led initiatives, except efforts are driven by the state. Often state agencies that oversee higher education are involved, and programs are most effective when there is legislative funding for staff and programming attached.

Example: Oregon
In 2015, Oregon passed legislation requiring the state's Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish an OER grant program and hire a staff person to oversee it. The bill also requires public post-secondary institutions to prominently mark courses whose course materials exclusively consist of open or free textbooks. The legislature appropriated $700,000 to support the program, and the projected savings are $1.7 million.

Zero Textbook Cost Degrees

One of the latest trends in OER is efforts to develop entire degree programs that use OER in every single course. This concentrates the benefits of OER along a degree pathway, delivering significant savings to students and resulting in demonstrated increases in course completion.

Example: California
In 2016, the California government appropriated $5 million to support the creation of Zero Textbook Cost Degrees at the state's community colleges. Among the justifications for the program were that the more than 100 institutions in that system could easily share and build upon each other's work, so investing in one degree at one college, could lead to multiple degrees at multiple colleges. This follows a nationwide trend pioneered by Tidewater Community College in Virginia, and a 38-campus initiative led by the non-profit Achieving the Dream launched earlier this year.

More Information

Where to Find OER

Open Textbook Library www.open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/
OpenStax www.openstax.org
Lumen Learning www.lumenlearning.com
OER Commons www.oercommons.org
MERLOT www.merlot.org
Boundless Learning www.boundless.com

Advocacy Groups

SPARC www.sparcopen.org
U.S. PIRG www.uspirg.org
Open Textbook Alliance www.opentextbookalliance.org
Open Textbook Network www.open.umn.edu
Achieving the Dream www.achievingthedream.org
Creative Commons www.creativecommons.org

Other Resources for Policymakers

Web Resources
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
Kalamazoo Promise and Place-Based Scholarships
http://www.upjohn.org/research/education/kalamazoo-promise-place-based-scholarships

College Promise Campaign
Research
https://collegepromise.org/category/cp-research/

University of Pennsylvania Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy
Promise Program Catalog
http://www.ahead-penn.org/creating-knowledge/college-promise

National Conference of State Legislatures
Free Community College
http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/free-community-college.aspx

American Association of State Colleges and Universities
The Promises and Pitfalls of State Free Community College Plans – May 2016
http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/policy-matters/freecommunitycollege.pdf

Presentations
Promise Programs: Impact on Educational Performance and Economic Development
A presentation by Professors Michelle Miller-Adams, W. E. Upjohn Research Institute and Grand Valley State College, and Jennifer Iriti, Evaluation for Learning Group, University of Pittsburgh
http://www.freecollegenow.org/promise_program_standalone

The Case for Free Public Higher Education
A presentation by Sara Goldrick Rab, Professor of Higher Education Policy and Sociology at Temple University
http://www.freecollegenow.org/case_for_free_highered

About the Campaign for Free College Tuition

The Campaign for Free College Tuition (CFCT) is a bi-partisan, inter-generational coalition of individuals and groups who believe today's economy requires the country to make higher education affordable for everyone if we are going to have a workforce with the skills needed for us to compete in the global marketplace. Established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in 2014, CFCT has been at the forefront of the free college tuition movement since its inception.

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Morley Winograd is a nationally known expert on the millennial generation. He is co-author (with Mike Hais) of three highly acclaimed books, “Millennial Momentum” (2011), “Millennial Makeover” (2008), and “Millennial Majority” (2013) on the impact the generation will have on America’s future. Morley is also a Senior Fellow at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School’s Center on Communication Leadership and Policy. He served as senior policy advisor to Vice President Al Gore during the second term of the Clinton administration and directed its reinventing government efforts.

Doug Ross
President, American Promise Schools
Vice President, The Campaign for Free College Tuition

Doug Ross has started and managed public charters schools in Michigan. His work currently focuses on learning how to turn around failing urban high schools. Doug has also had a distinguished public service career. During President Clinton’s first term, he was Assistant U.S.

Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training; and previously served as Michigan's Director of Commerce and a member of the Michigan Senate.

Laird Harris
Founder/Principal, Harris and Smith Public Affairs
Secretary/Treasurer, The Campaign for Free College Tuition

Prior to founding his public affairs firm in 1987, Laird served as assistant director of the Community Services Administration during the Carter administration and Chief Policy Assistant for Governor Booth Gardner of Washington. As a consultant, Laird provides public affairs and strategic communication planning services, facilitates efforts to resolve disputes and identify common interests among government and private sector officials, and works with executives and boards of directors on strategic planning. Laird also has extensive campaign management experience and teaches strategic communications at the University of Washington.

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