

# COLLEGE PROMISE



2024-25 Annual Report



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# Our Mission

College Promise is a national, nonpartisan, non-profit organization working to ensure all students can access the education and support they need to achieve social and economic mobility.

College Promise builds broad public support for funding the first two or more years of postsecondary education for hard-working students, and ensuring those students have access to quality educational opportunities and supports.

# A Decade of Promise

Since its inception in 2015, College Promise has grown from an emerging idea into a national movement, driven by an unwavering commitment to expanding postsecondary opportunity for all. Over the past decade, Promise programs have expanded from 53 to more than 450—a 750 percent increase that has transformed College Promise into a national movement reaching all 50 states.

Each year, thousands of students enroll in college, persist, and graduate with the degrees, credentials, and skills needed to thrive in today's economy. This progress has been made possible through strong cross-sector partnerships among local governments, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations—all aligned around a shared investment in economic mobility and community vitality.

A decade of Promise marks more than a milestone. It signals an evolution. While our mission remains rooted in expanding access to postsecondary education, the movement has sharpened its focus on completion, career pathways, and long-term economic mobility. Through targeted supports, innovative tools, and initiatives such as our annual Careers Institute—launched in 2020—we are strengthening the connection between education and the workforce, ensuring students not only enter college or career training programs, but complete them and transition into meaningful, family-sustaining careers.

# A Decade of Promise

In 2025, our 10th Anniversary campaign celebrated the transformative power of Promise programs and the collective leadership behind them. Through national convenings, publications, and strategic partnerships, we elevated the voices of students, alumni, families, educators, and policymakers who demonstrate every day how Promise unlocks opportunity and strengthens communities.

On October 20–21, 2025, we gathered at Palo Alto College in the Alamo Colleges District to commemorate this milestone through our 10th Anniversary and Careers Institute convening. Together, we honored the progress of the past decade while charting the next, one centered on workforce alignment, economic mobility, and shared prosperity.

As we look ahead, College Promise remains steadfast in its commitment to innovation, resilience, and impact. We are not only expanding access to education—we are building an educated workforce, strengthening communities, and advancing inclusive prosperity for the future.

# 2025 College Promise National Impact Honorees

At the 10th Anniversary celebration and Career Institute, College Promise honored 15 Promise programs.

*"These 15 programs embody the promise of what's possible when communities invest in their students," said Rosye Cloud, interim CEO, College Promise. "By helping students pursue college and careers, they are not only changing lives, they are strengthening their communities, building the workforce of the future, and setting an example for programs nationwide."*

AlamoPROMISE.

Arizona Promise Program

Colorado Promise

Detroit Promise

Hawai'i Promise Scholarship

Hope Chicago

Los Angeles College Promise

M.J. Foster Promise Program

Massachusetts Free Community College Program

New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship

North Star Promise

Richmond Promise

Say Yes Buffalo

Valley Promise

Washington Student Achievement Council

# 2025 College Promise National Impact Honorees



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 **WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL**  
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# College Promise Career Institute San Antonio

On October 20-21, 2025, College Promise hosted a Career Institute in San Antonio in conjunction with the 10th Anniversary celebration. The 2-day event brought together educators, policymakers, employers, philanthropic leaders, and students to explore innovative strategies that bridge the gap between education and workforce opportunities. The event was designed to prepare students for the changing economy and job market, and provided sessions and discussions regarding career pathways, sustainable financing, and employment opportunities.



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# ACCESS



# Celebrating the Growth of the Promise Movement

As of November 2025, the College Promise team has identified more than 450 Promise programs across all 50 states and Washington, DC. Additionally, 38 states have established active statewide programs, with recent adoption in Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Michigan. Promise programs are now integrated in over 1,700 colleges and universities. Notable recent developments include:

**Michigan:** On April 10, 2025, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced a new Executive Directive aimed at expanding access to college and skills training for men across Michigan.

**New York:** As a part of the FY 2026 budget, Gov. Kathy Hochul launched the Free Community College program for adults between the ages of 25 and 55 pursuing higher education in high-demand fields.

**Iowa:** Through Senate File 288, public universities and community colleges in Iowa are required to provide staff support, accommodations, and leaves of absence to pregnant or parenting students.

**Washington:** House Bill 1587 was enacted to encourage local governments to partner new Promise programs with the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship.

**Connecticut:** In the 2025 session Connecticut legislators signed Senate Bill 1410, creating a task force to examine current Promise programs, evaluate student needs, and propose strategies for statewide expansion.

**Massachusetts:** Gov. Maura Healy, along with state legislators, pursued significant postsecondary education and workforce alignment through initiatives such as the BRIGHT Act, which improves higher education facilities and promotes job-creation.

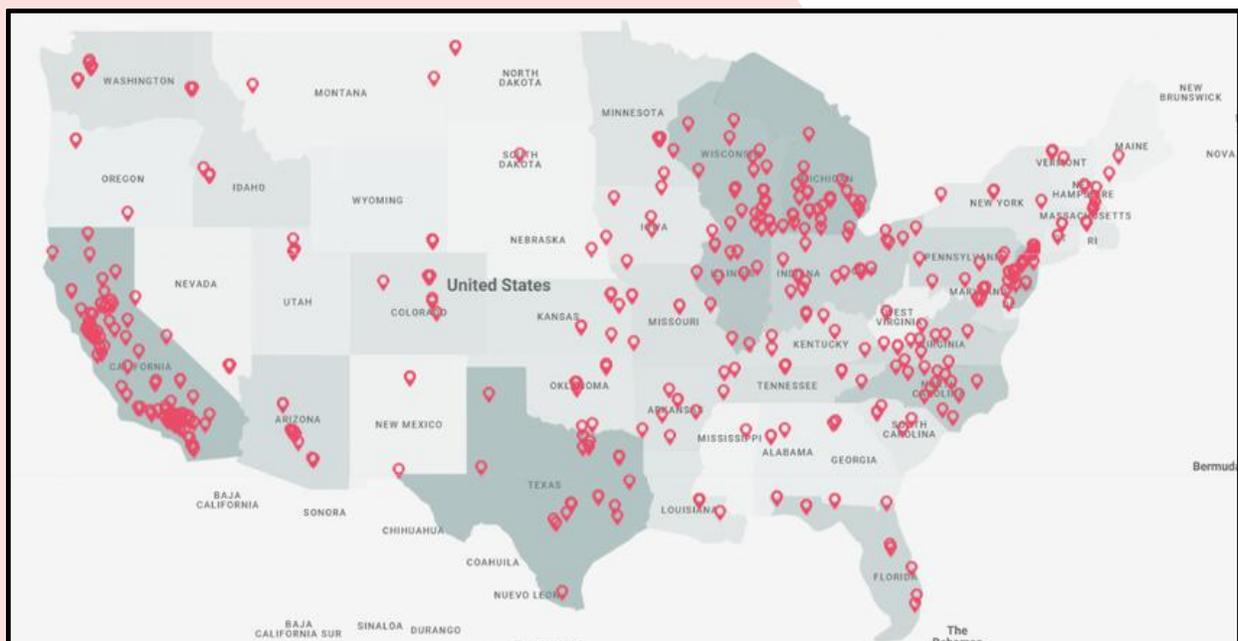
**Minnesota:** In addition to enacting North Star Promise, a statewide tuition-free program, Gov. Tim Walz and state legislators approved a requirement that every postsecondary institution designate a student parent liaison.

# The MyPromise Tool

The MyPromise Tool is a pioneering student-centered database of Promise Programs available nationwide. With 3,000 views per month, the platform connects students, families, counselors, researchers, and mentors with Promise programs and resources. The website provides a wealth of information about statewide and local Promise programs, giving comprehensive resources to all prospective college students.

Throughout the year, the MyPromise Tool expanded to improve the tool's search functionality and data collection methods. Users can now identify the 12 Promise programs that integrate Child Savings Accounts (CSAs), broadening the scope of insights Promise programs can provide. Further improved search features also enable users to find programs that serve specific populations, including student parents, veterans, and formerly incarcerated individuals. In addition, College Promise collected feedback from over 200 Promise practitioners at convenings to develop a system that allows Promise program staff to update their program information directly, ensuring that data is timely and accurate.

As a result, The MyPromise Tool now reflects a more comprehensive national collection of Promise programs, with ongoing inclusion efforts to keep the dataset up to date.



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# ACHIEVEMENT



# Student Parents Success

In 2025, College Promise launched an initiative to underpin the educational pursuits and economic mobility of student fathers. College Promise has identified student fathers as a subgroup of interest given that student fathers represent only 20% of undergraduate students. Student fathers often face a dilemma between the need to work full-time to support their families and the long-term economic benefits of a college degree. While about half of student parents attend college full-time, a parent must work an average of 52 hours per week to cover childcare and tuition costs at a four-year public school. Moreover, student fathers are less likely to complete college than their non-parent peers due to financial pressures, childcare responsibilities, and mental health issues. Providing student fathers with the support necessary to pursue and complete their postsecondary education will include them in opportunities that advance their economic mobility.

College Promise produced a comprehensive landscape analysis, which reviewed student parent data, transformative practices, and systemic opportunities to better align resources to support student fathers. The analysis included demographic data, policy scans, and promising models, and helped inform both the convenings and technical assistance. A national policy brief titled, Ready to Learn, Ready to Work: How Student Fathers Can Transform America's Workforce, was published to share findings from the landscape analysis and convenings. It offered actionable recommendations for state and institutional leaders seeking to better support student fathers through targeted outreach, data collection, and wraparound services. Finally, College Promise hosted three convenings that spread awareness and highlighted effective and collaborative pathways to success alongside local policymakers, educators, and partners in Michigan, Illinois, and Texas.



From left to right:  
Brandon Keyes,  
University of  
Michigan graduate  
behind Gov.  
Gretchen Whitmer;  
Bryan Barney,  
Hope Chicago  
Parent Scholar

Overall, this initiative developed practices in six states that enhanced data-integration efforts, explored collaboration opportunities, and provided policy support. Beyond technical support, College Promise catalyzed interest in investing in the futures of student parents. Notable engagements were realized with the University of Hawai'i, Sen. Bill Cassidy's office, the Louisiana Board of Regents, Sen. Ted Budd's office, the North Carolina Community College System, and the Washington State Achievement Council. This program was created and maintained with the partnership and support of the ECMC Foundation.

# National Convenings

Over the past year, College Promise organized and participated in several major national convenings and events in Detroit, MI; Auburn Hills, MI; Chicago, IL, and San Antonio, TX. The convenings reinforced the urgent need to reimagine higher education systems to better support student parents, specifically student fathers, who face unique obstacles that lead to low attendance and retention rates and, consequently, an inability to financially support their education. These convenings successfully brought together policymakers, practitioners, and advocacy organizations to collaborate on strategies for improving affordability, utilizing wraparound supports, and enhancing workforce development opportunities. Local, regional, and national policymakers provided attendees with in-depth insights into the higher education landscape at each convening. We assembled state policymakers, higher education officers, and Promise leaders who were deeply involved in higher education policy and practice, enriching the discussions with their expertise.

The convenings yielded several key themes; (1) disruptions in attendance are to be expected and supported by flexible institutional arrangements; (2) traditional timelines for degree completion do not reflect the goals or realities of adult learners and caregivers; (3) deficit-based narratives must be shifted to asset-based ones, uplifting the potential of student fathers and recognizing their strength; and (4) better data and storytelling are essential to reflect the full experience of male students, which will aid in improving their educational access, completion, and employment outcomes.



# National Convenings

## April 10, 2025 | Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills, MI

College Promise hosted a convening to increase prosperity for the young men of Michigan in partnership with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, educational institutions, and local organizations. The convening included remarks from Brandon Keyes, a student father at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor who graduated at age 41 with a degree in Organizational Studies and a minor in Entrepreneurship. Brandon is married, has two children (ages 2 and 3), and previously served in the U.S. Army. Discussions at the event revolved around opportunity-development for student fathers, pathways to education, and outlooks for success in Michigan.



## April 29, 2025 | Farragut Career Academy IB World School, Chicago, IL

In partnership with Hope Chicago, College Promise hosted a half-day symposium attended by over 60 educators, policymakers, and community advocates. The convening focused on the growing need for innovative, family-centered approaches to postsecondary education and workforce development. The symposium's discussion and activities elevated the importance of education provision for parent students, especially fathers, and addressed Illinois' commitment to their growth.



# National Convenings

**May 29, 2025 | Alamo College District, San Antonio, TX**

College Promise and Alamo Colleges District collaborated to host a convening focused on advancing data-driven supports and best practices for student fathers. The event facilitated effective discussion between experts and stakeholders to pursue a shared purpose of expanding the impact of targeted interventions, wraparound services, and institutional policies. Notable sessions included conversations about community engagement, student father support strategies, and workforce preparedness.



Through its events and convenings, College Promise has effectively connected with educational leaders nationwide and maintained partnerships with community and national organizations and legislators. These efforts have allowed the Promise movement to ensure timely information dissemination, promote collective learning, and respond proactively to federal developments—expanding College Promise’s impact.

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# SUPPORT



# Career Acceleration

College Promise Programs are leaders in preparing students for careers through their career resources and services tailored to help meet the needs of their communities. Increasingly, communities and learners need a caring group of professionals to support learners on their journey beyond the provision of professional guidance and labor market information. Students also need a single, free, enduring, research-informed solution that connects students and job seekers to pathways and professional skill instruction that aids in the selection, development, and refinement to help launch economically mobile careers. College Promise, with its partner, Promise Pathways, an organization focused on college-career alignment, is actively working with Promise communities across the country to advance economic opportunity in their regions, utilizing the Career Acceleration Tool (CAT).

The Career Acceleration Tool (CAT) is a software solution that can clarify college and career pathways and align the skills necessary to improve educational and economic outcomes for millions of individuals from all backgrounds. The platform focuses on six components of attaining credentials that lead to increased economic opportunity and social opportunity: (1) career identification; (2) strategic skill development planning; (3) belonging and wellness support; (4) financial wellness support; (5) data literacy instruction; and (6) tools to identify community supports. Our pilot is designed to position learners into the best career possible with the least amount of financial and time investment while crafting a pathway that meets their goals, providing long-term economic opportunity. The program prioritizes the best-fit sequence of course/training and local labor market opportunities.

Beyond CAT, College Promise is developing a Career Acceleration Playbook to serve as a practical guide for Promise program leaders and practitioners to strengthen connections among students, their educational institutions, and the workforce. Upon completion, the playbook will grant leaders and practitioners: (1) foundational understanding of the labor market and its key components; (2) greater awareness of how students choose their majors and strategies to guide them toward opportunities aligned with labor market demand; (3) key insights into factors shaping economic mobility and strategies to help students access greater economic opportunities; and (4) practical approaches to build partnerships that connect students and educational institutions with local and regional workforce needs. The playbook aims to equip students with labor market insights to advance their potential and help them make well-informed career choices.

# Technical Assistance

As the College Promise movement expands nationally, College Promise offers expertise and direct technical assistance to emerging Promise programs to help them plan a successful launch by identifying federal, state, and local funding sources and key wraparound services for students. Over the past year, the College Promise has led successful partnerships with several communities and states.

College Promise provided technical assistance to Alamo Colleges and AlamoPROMISE by developing and refining key performance indicators, evaluating student performance outcomes, and providing strategies for growth. College Promise delivered preliminary and follow-up insights addressing post-pandemic enrollment, cohort improvement, first-year retention, and more. College Promise also provided strategies to transform the insights into action and convened with Alamo Colleges and AlamoPROMISE to discuss the findings and implications. With the technical assistance of College Promise, Alamo Colleges and AlamoPROMISE have been equipped with the tools necessary to ensure success.



# National Leadership Council

The College Promise National Leadership Council is an initiative dedicated to furthering the Promise movement on a national scale. The Council aims to disseminate exemplary practices, address program challenges, and advocate for the expansion and sustainability of the National Promise movement through publications, events, and advocacy.

## **The National Leadership Council:**



Krissy DeAlejandro, President and CEO, tnAchieves



Mike Flores, Chancellor, Alamo Colleges



John Jones, President and CEO, Hope Toledo



Leidra McQueen, Executive Director, Lynchburg Beacon of Hope



David Rust, CEO, Say Yes Buffalo



Christopher Whitmore, Executive Director, Richmond Promise



Wytrice Harris, Senior Director, Detroit Promise

# Wraparound Supports

Promise programs across the nation have embraced the value of wraparound supports that relieve students of the financial burdens of everyday life, ultimately leading them towards success.

In 2024, data showed that all Promise programs have integrated wraparound supports by providing students with complementary assistance such as child care, counseling services, housing support, free textbooks, and more.

**Promise Program Selected Support Provisions, United States, 2025**

| Data                           | Number of Promise Programs | Percentage (Yes) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Counseling Services            | 113                        | 26%              |
| Textbooks                      | 105                        | 24%              |
| Career Services                | 77                         | 18%              |
| Transportation Support         | 37                         | 8%               |
| Food Assistance                | 34                         | 8%               |
| Financial Education            | 29                         | 7%               |
| Housing Support                | 28                         | 6%               |
| Internship Opportunities       | 17                         | 4%               |
| Child Care                     | 9                          | 2%               |
| <b>Total Reported Programs</b> | <b>441</b>                 | <b>100%</b>      |

By systematically addressing the basic challenges students face, Promise programs have increased student retention and completion rates. The implementation of comprehensive relief enables students to overcome the hurdles that would otherwise interrupt their educational experience.

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# ADVANCING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



# Children's Savings Accounts Integration

Since 2017, College Promise has partnered with the Mott Foundation to leverage its experience, expertise, stakeholders, and resources to significantly change the trajectory for hundreds of thousands of children and families. College Promise aims to expand the impact of Promise programs by incorporating Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs) into their designs to help students earn certificates and degrees. When integrated, these initiatives embed sustainable incentives, scholarships, college-community partnerships, savings, analytics, cross-sector collaboration, and a clear pathway for student success to and through postsecondary education, career, and community. College Promise's overarching goal is to cultivate momentum and foster increased alignment within the Promise and CSA fields.

College Promise pairs its programs with CSA to expand affordability and strengthen long-term financial stability. CSA funds can help cover tuition, fees, or other essential costs that often prevent students, especially low-income students, from persisting to graduation. Savings accounts are impactful at every step of a student's journey to ensure that they can participate meaningfully in building wealth and educational opportunities. Together, Promise programs and CSAs work together to create a robust, future-focused investment strategy for students.

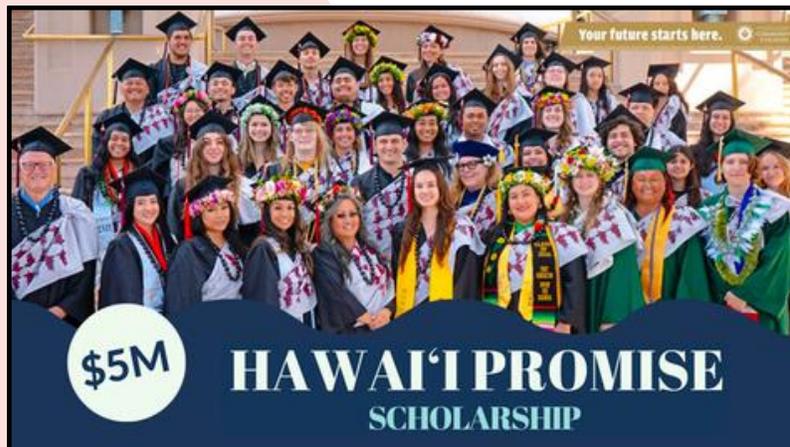
Since the launch of this work, our organization has published two playbooks, multiple policy briefs, and articles, and engaged a Peer Learning Network of over 80 communities and national stakeholders committed to sharing best practices and raising awareness about CP-CSA integration.

College Promise celebrates the Promise Programs nationwide that have worked to integrate savings elements into their designs: Boston, MA; Kansas City, MO; Wabash County, IN; Lansing, Mason County, Muskegon, Northport, MI; Providence, RI; El Monte, Oakland, and West Sacramento, CA; Dallas, TX; California, Maine, and Indiana (statewide).

# Promise Program Community Voices Survey

In November 2025, with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, College Promise designed a survey to capture the impact, capacities, and needs of the movement. Promise Program leaders across the nation participated in answering 28 questions. The survey's insights will be used to guide technical assistance, resource development, and advocacy priorities for the Promise community.

## Promise Spotlight: Hawai'i Promise



In Hawai'i, a statewide Promise Program designed for those most in need of financial assistance, researchers have found that students of the statewide program (1) earn more credits than non-Hawai'i Promise students, (2) had higher passing rates, (3) are more likely to enroll full-time, and (4) have a higher retention rate than the comparable national average. Perhaps most encouraging: Hawai'i Promise students had higher graduation rates than their non-Hawai'i Promise peers (University of Hawai'i System, 2024). This research was conducted with the partnership and support of the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation.

# National Advisory Board

Earlier this year, College Promise appointed the National Advisory Board members:

- Sarita Brown, President and Co-Founder, Excelencia in Education
- Jeff Strohl, Director, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
- Sue McMillin, President and CEO, Greater Texas Foundation

## National Advisory Board:

Martha Kanter  
Board President and CEO Emerita, College Promise

Robert “Bob” C. Ballard, Co-Chair  
President & CEO Emeritus, Scholarship America

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

Sarita E. Brown  
President, Excelencia in Education

Christopher Cabaldon  
Senator, California State Senate; Partner, Capital  
Impact; Former Mayor (1998-2020), City of West  
Sacramento

Constance Carroll  
President & CEO, California Community College  
Baccalaureate Association

Kimberly Ternate Ding  
Actor and Nursing Teacher, Jefferson Community  
and Technical College

Kyle Lierman  
CEO, Civic Nation

Joe May  
Chancellor Emeritus, Dallas County Community  
College District

Sue McMillin  
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William F.L. Moses  
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Michael Nettles  
Full Professor & Endowed Chair of Predictive  
Analytics and Psychometrics, Department of  
Psychology, Morgan State University

Wade Randlett  
CEO, Transportation Fuels Division, General Biofuels

LaVerne Srinivasan  
Former Vice President, Carnegie Corporation

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Janet Pitt  
Founder and CEO, Diplomacy Matters

Mike Flores  
Chancellor, Alamo Colleges District

Sally Rocker  
Managing Director & General Counsel, J.C. Flowers &  
Co.

Jee Hang Lee  
President & CEO, Association of Community College  
Trustees

# Acknowledgements

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HAROLD K.L. CASTLE  
FOUNDATION



CHARLES STEWART  
MOTT FOUNDATION



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**Learn More:** <https://www.collegepromise.org/>

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