



California
Promise

California College Promise

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS AND PERCEPTIONS FROM THE FIELD

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ABSTRACT

College Promise programs are thriving in California, and with the continued growth comes a need to understand the features of these diverse efforts and the perspectives of the communities in which they exist. In 2018, the James Irvine Foundation supported California College Promise Project (CCPP) at WestEd to study the College Promise landscape in California, including how practitioners, institutional leaders, and other stakeholders think about where the Promise movement is heading. This report describes results of a statewide scan of the 42 College Promise programs that were active in fall 2017 and summarizes the perspectives of over 150 survey and interview respondents.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade and especially in the last few years, the number of College Promise programs has steadily risen across the United States (Perna & Leigh, 2018). College Promise programs have been established and supported by colleges, universities, cities, foundations, private corporations, and local and state governments. Today, 200 programs are underway in 42 states (College Promise Campaign, 2018).

In California, College Promise programs are being developed at an especially rapid rate. In August 2016, 23 College Promise programs operated in communities across the state. Just two years later, in fall 2018, 42 programs were in place (CCPP, 2018). That number is only expected to rise in the coming years as the momentum for such programs continues, bolstered by recent College Promise legislation.

With more College Promise programs than any other state, California is a source of potential insight into the overall Promise movement. The data summarized in this report provide a baseline for measuring the ways in which College Promise programs are being developed, strengthened, and expanded during this period of change, and for future analysis to understand the relative effect of various program features on student outcomes.

The research team for this scan collected information from practitioners, policymakers, and program partners and also drew on WestEd's California College Promise database. This report defines College Promise programs and offers an overview of the historical, political, economic, and environmental factors that have made California an environment conducive to the growth of College Promise programs. The sections that follow describe the program landscape and the perceptions of the impact and future of College Promise in California.

Defining College Promise Programs

There is variation in the programmatic and institutional features of programs that use the College Promise name or share similar program characteristics. This variation makes it difficult to classify programs for analysis (Perna & Leigh, 2018). However, most researchers agree on two defining features of College Promise programs: 1) financial support that encourages students to attend postsecondary institutions and 2) eligibility criteria based on where students live or attend school (Perna & Leigh, 2018; Miller-Adams, 2015). In their own studies of College Promise programs, Laura Perna and her colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (PennaAHEAD) include all programs that encourage college attainment through financial support based on where they live or attend school (Perna & Leigh, 2018). Some other researchers include a different parameter in their own definition, specifying that programs have a stated goal to deepen the community's college-going culture and economic strength (Miller-Adams, 2015; Swanson, Watson, Ritter, & Nichols, 2017).

In determining which College Promise programs to include in this analysis, the California College Promise Project (CCPP) built on the parameters used by Perna and Leigh (2018) and further bound the scan by program implementation date and program scope. Specifically, a California College Promise program was included in the analysis if it:

- » offered students direct financial support for college costs;¹
- » targeted students based on the location of their residence or their school attendance;
- » began serving students in fall 2017 or earlier; and
- » was designed to serve all students who meet the program's eligibility criteria, without a limit on the number of students who can receive the support.²

California's Historical Commitment to College Affordability

California has a long history of working to ensure that higher education is affordable for state residents, starting back in 1868 when the state legislature declared that “admission and tuition shall be free to all residents of the state” (California Assembly Bill 583, 1868). The 1960 policy framework known as the California Master Plan for Higher Education codified free tuition at all three of the state's higher education segments: University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and California Community Colleges (CCC) (Callen, 2009; Johnson, 2010). Starting in 1921, California residents who attended the state's higher education institutions were charged incidental fees. The state's initial commitment to tuition-free education held until the mid-1970s, when the UCs and CSUs began charging a modest tuition. In 1985, annual tuition at California's four-year state universities had risen to \$1,296, representing an increase of 51 percent within one decade, and community colleges began charging a \$5-per-unit fee (Vega, 2014; San Mateo County Community College District, 2013). Significant state budget cuts in the late 1990s and mid-2000s, along with a state budget deficit in 2009, resulted in additional tuition and fee increases in all three segments.

In response to initiation of per-unit fees for community colleges in 1985, California enacted the Community College Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver to reduce the financial barriers to college attendance for students with family incomes below 1.5 times the national poverty level. Under this program, students remained responsible for paying other fees, such as student services and health fees.

Despite the rising fees, the cost of higher education in California continues to be lower than in most other states. In 2017/18, California's average annual tuition of \$9,680 at its four-year universities for in-state residents ranked it 22nd among the 50 states in average tuition and fees for public four-year institutions (Ma, Baum, Pender, & Welch, 2017). But it ranked lowest of all states in average tuition fees for full-time, in-district community college students, with a \$46 per-unit fee, equivalent to \$1,104 for full-time students (Icanaffordcollege.com, n.d.; Ma et al., 2017). Still, many state residents worry about college costs. A 2017 study by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC, 2016) found that “three in

1 Programs that only offer a financial award outside of the school year, such as small stipends for summer coursework or tuition for college coursework for high school students, were excluded from the analysis.

2 This parameter makes a distinction between programs that are designed to serve all eligible students and programs that use a competitive process for allocating a limited number of scholarships. Pilot programs that have started with a limited number of spots but intend to expand as defined above were included.

four Californians (75 percent) agree that the price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so.”

College Promise Legislation

Recent legislative activity, reaffirming California’s historic commitment to promoting equity in college access and completion, has incentivized College Promise program development.

In 2016, the California legislature (California Assembly Bill 1741) authorized the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) to administer California College Promise Innovation Grants for the development or improvement of a College Promise program. To be eligible for the one-time grant, community colleges or districts were required to partner with a K–12, CSU, or UC school, campus, or district and to leverage existing local and state funding. The stated aims of offering grants to develop or strengthen College Promise programs were to reduce and eliminate equity gaps for student groups that are underrepresented in higher education; increase students’ preparation for and attendance at community college; and support students to complete a certificate or degree or transfer to a four-year institution. The available grants have been given to six multi-college districts (for a maximum of \$1.5M) and eight single-college districts or multi-college districts on behalf of a single college (for a maximum of \$750,000).

Also in 2016, the legislature passed a College Promise bill for California State Universities (CSUs). Senate Bill 412 (SB412), Public Postsecondary Education: The California College Promise, requires that, by 2018/19, 20 of the system’s 23 campuses offer on-time graduation promises (i.e., graduation within four years for CSU freshmen and graduation within two years for students who transfer from a community college). Campuses were granted flexibility in determining approaches for meeting this new requirement. Although College Promise is in the bill’s name, only one CSU program includes financial support (and, thus, is included in our landscape scan), highlighting the potential variation in how the term College Promise is used. Although this legislation does not directly involve community colleges, many CSU campuses have developed partnerships with community colleges and established programs for students who are pursuing an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) at a California community college to complete bachelor’s degrees in two years at a CSU campus (CSU, n.d).

In August 2017, the CCCCCO changed the name of the BOG Fee Waiver to the California College Promise Grant (CCPG). With 45 percent of California’s community college students eligible for the tuition grant (CCCCO, 2016a), the program effectively provides a base of guaranteed state-level funding for the tuition portion of College Promise programs. By covering tuition for eligible students, CCPG frees community colleges to use other funds that they raise to either cover additional attendance costs (e.g., non-tuition fees, books, and transportation) and/or to waive tuition for students who are not eligible for support through CCPG.

In 2017, the state legislature also passed Assembly Bill 19 (AB 19), Community Colleges: California College Promise, which provides financial resources to community colleges for College Promise programs. The legislation does not explicitly define the parameters of a College Promise program, but the stated goals of the funding are to improve college readiness, increase persistence and completion rates, and close achievement gaps. The legislation allocated \$46 million for programs in the 2018/19 state

budget, allowing for, but not requiring, community colleges to waive one year of tuition and fees for first-time community college students.

Community Support for College Promise

While recent College Promise legislation codifies the state's commitment to College Promise and its alignment with the state's longtime goal of improving equitable access to postsecondary education, as described in the CCCCCO's Vision for Success (n.d.), dozens of College Promise programs predate the recent state policy activity. Most of them are led by community colleges, but programs have also been initiated by four-year universities, local governments, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and business leaders. In the city of Richmond, for example, the local government and Chevron Corporation developed a community benefits agreement that included funding for the Richmond Promise, with the goal of producing a more educated workforce. In Oakland and West Sacramento, local College Promise programs are led by each respective Mayor's office, in collaboration with local education systems and community organizations.

College Promise in California is rooted in local efforts and often involves multiple actors across education, civic, and industry sectors.

In short, College Promise in California is rooted in local efforts and often involves multiple actors across education, civic, and industry sectors. Today, College Promise in California retains this essential local character while also benefiting from political and financial support at the state level.

Advocates, researchers, and technical assistance providers have also contributed to the growth of College Promise in California. Prior to assuming his current role as Chancellor of the California Community Colleges System in 2016, Eloy Oakley was president of Long Beach College where he worked in partnership with leaders at the Long Beach Unified School District and CSU Long Beach to strengthen the decade-old Long Beach College Promise. He continues to support College Promise in his new role, especially as it aligns with complementary student support initiatives, such as the Guided Pathways framework for structured progression through degree programs.³ Martha Kanter, the Executive Director of the College Promise Campaign (CPC), a College Promise advocacy organization, previously held leadership roles in California's community college system. Dr. Kanter regularly engages with California leaders on College Promise strategy and helps plan program launches that have included the involvement of CPC Board Chair (and former second lady of the United States) Dr. Jill Biden. Other state leaders and practitioners offer ongoing support and guidance on issues of College Promise policy and practice through the California College Promise Leadership Team.⁴

³ According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (2016b), the Guided Pathways framework "creates a highly structured approach to student success that provides all students with a set of clear course-taking patterns that promotes better enrollment decisions and prepares students for future success. The Guided Pathways framework also integrates support services in ways that make it easier for students to get the help they need during every step of their community college experience."

⁴ The California College Promise Leadership team, which identifies strategies for developing and strengthening College Promise programs, comprises Brian King, Chancellor, Los Rios Community College District; Constance Carroll, Chancellor,

Information about strategies to develop and improve College Promise programs has been available to California community colleges and other interested parties since 2016 through the California College Promise Project (CCPP) and its partners. With the goal of supporting and informing College Promise program growth, a widely disseminated booklet profiled California College Promise programs, and two statewide College Promise conferences⁵ offered leaders and practitioners opportunities to learn strategies for developing, funding, strengthening, and evaluating programs (Rauner & Smith, 2016).

AB 19 signals state support for College Promise as a framework for student success and as a mechanism for aligning with other student success initiatives to meet the equity demands as stated in the CCCC's Vision of Success. This legislation, combined with the continuing momentum at the local level, suggests that College Promise is poised to grow even more in the years to come and underscores the need to take stock of California's evolving College Promise landscape and understand the field's perceptions of this growing movement.

San Diego Community College District; Larry Galizio, President and CEO, Community College League of California; Geoff Green, Chief Executive Officer, Santa Barbara City College Foundation; Martha Kanter, Executive Director, College Promise Campaign; Eloy Oakley, Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office; Mary Rauner, Senior Research Associate, WestEd; Francisco Rodriguez, Chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District; Erik Skinner, Vice President of Administrative Services, Sierra College; and Judy Minor, Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District.

- 5 College Promise in California: Strategies, Challenges and Successes was held on August 30, 2016 in Oakland (<https://relwest.wested.org/events/333>) and California Promise: Pathways to Student Success (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Events/Details/350>) was held on August 30, 2017 in Sacramento.

METHODOLOGY

This study draws on multiple sources of data to document the characteristics of California College Promise programs and to describe the perceptions of College Promise among relevant practitioners, policymakers, and program partners. The scan was guided by five questions:

1. What is the vision of California College Promise?
2. What are the characteristics of existing College Promise programs in California?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of College Promise in California?
4. What is the perceived future of College Promise in California?
5. What are the support and technical assistance needs of the field surrounding College Promise program design, implementation, and evaluation?

To help answer the questions about the vision, outcomes, future, and support for College Promise programs (questions 1, 3, 4, and 5), CCPP staff developed survey and interview protocols. The 17-item survey was emailed to 528 stakeholders from WestEd's CCPP database. WestEd received 141 responses, for a response rate of 27 percent. The interview protocol mirrored the content of the survey, with some wording changes and more opportunities to probe for deeper understanding. A total of 15 individuals participated in the interviews, with each interview lasting approximately one hour. See appendix C for a list of the survey and interview items.

Further steps were taken to gather information on characteristics of each of the 42 programs that were active in fall 2018 (question 2). Data was originally gathered from program websites and updated intermittently based on information systematically retrieved from Google alerts. CCPP staff then contacted a staff member from each program to confirm data and add new information. To ensure that all College Promise programs that fit the scan's inclusion criteria were in the analysis, a survey to confirm program information was sent to all other programs in California that use the College Promise name or had announced a prospective program. See appendix A for more details on the methods and the sample used in this study.

FINDINGS

The following sections of the report summarize responses to each of the five questions. Information related to questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 was drawn from survey and/or interview responses. Information for question 2 was drawn from the CCPP database.

1. What is the vision of California College Promise?

One hundred and thirty-nine of 141 survey respondents and all 15 interviewees addressed an open-ended query about the definition of College Promise. All 154 respondents, irrespective of whether they were affiliated with a community college, referred to the prominent role of community colleges in College Promise programs. This is not surprising given the financial and other support from the CCCC. One community college representative described College Promise as a “student success initiative at a community college,” and a respondent from a K-12 school district described College Promise as a “partnership with a . . . local community college district.” Three respondents also referred to recent California state legislation in their definition.

Most of the other comments and responses fall into two categories: 1) program goals or expected outcomes and 2) program features. Each response could be coded into more than one category.

Program Goals and Expected Outcomes

The most frequently mentioned goal of California College Promise programs included in respondents’ definitions of such programs was to increase college access (48 of 154 respondents). Some respondents also articulated the hope that California College Promise would improve college access and persistence by developing a college-going culture in K-12 schools and minimizing financial barriers for students. A community college respondent indicated that access will be enhanced when College Promise programs ensure that the transition from high school to college is seamless: “Most students should already have college units before exiting [high] school; they should have an idea for their academic pathways; they should have explored all options for financial aid; and they should have little to no remediation needed.”

The second most frequently mentioned goal of College Promise was improving college completion or success for students and/or institutions (42 of 154 respondents). Six respondents also mentioned the importance of improving career attainment or workforce outcomes. A college foundation representative reported a goal of “providing a talented workforce that helps to grow the economy and improve the quality of life in a region.”

Only 9 respondents identified improving equity as a goal of College Promise, stressing the need to include “low-income,” “first-generation,” and “underrepresented” students. One chancellor for a community college district explained that College Promise “allows us to talk about equity and look at [student] supports.” A community college foundation respondent described College Promise as “the manifestation of the concept that access to higher education is a right.”

Program Features

When defining College Promise programs, many respondents also described specific program features, including financial assistance, academic support and student services, outreach and messaging, and program partnerships.

Financial Assistance. The majority of survey and interview respondents (94 of 154) referred to monetary support for students as a key feature of College Promise programs. Slightly more than half (51) of the 94 references were general in nature, stating that programs offer “financial support,” “eliminate financial barriers to college,” or “relieve financial burden.” A few (4) defined College Promise as offering “free” or “debt-free” college. Some respondents also referred to the specific costs that programs cover, including tuition (18), tuition and fees (18), and all college-related expenses, including textbooks and fees, for example (7).

Academic Support and Student Services. More than a third (55) of the 154 respondents for this question specified that College Promise programs provide more than financial support. A CCCCCO respondent explained that “College Promise means more than having tuition and fees waived to adequately support students.” A community college respondent echoed this sentiment, describing College Promise as “college affordability paired with other institutional and student service supports.”

“[College Promise is] college affordability paired with other institutional and student service supports.”

Respondents referred to various specific academic supports, including cohort models, academic counseling, block scheduling, and priority enrollment. Also mentioned specifically was Guided Pathways, a state-wide initiative designed to increase student completion and close achievement gaps by providing “all students with a clear set of course-taking patterns” and “integrate[d] support services” (see footnote 3, p. 5). In describing academic support, one community college respondent explained that College Promise includes “cohort learning communities, academic advising, tutoring, and intrusive interventions to keep students on track to achieve their goals.” Respondents also specified such student services as personal counseling, student engagement activities, and case management. Suggesting a comprehensive approach to supporting students, one community college respondent described College Promise programs as having “a dedication to student success through high-touch support services, which include coaching, mentoring, learning cohorts, and financial support for students.”

Outreach and Messaging. Only 4 respondents included messaging to students, families, and communities in their description of program features. Two respondents (one from a community college and one from the CCCCCO) described the importance of sharing College Promise program details with students in middle and high school. A community partner envisioned that the communication about affordable college should be targeted from the system office “to audiences throughout the state and in communities.”

Program Partnerships. Community partnerships were mentioned in 19 of the 154 College Promise definitions. Seven respondents referred to College Promise as a community-wide partnership and 5 referred to partnerships between community colleges, the K-12 system, and/or four-year institutions. A representative from the CCCCOC posited that “the programs that work really well are those that reach younger than high school students where the district partners with the community college and they work with students as early as elementary school so they envision their future in college.”

2. What are the characteristics of existing College Promise programs in California?

Many College Promise programs naturally make some changes year to year as they mature. With the advent of California’s AB 19 and the associated infusion of new funding to colleges, more substantial changes are expected to be made by existing programs and new programs are being developed. However, program information for this section is drawn from the CCPP database and describes the 42 programs that existed at the time of the scan. The present tense is used throughout to indicate the program features at the time of the analysis.

All 42 of the state’s programs determine eligible students based on where students live or attend school, offer direct financial support for students, and serve all students who meet the program’s eligibility criteria. Programs were not included in this analysis if they only provide financial and other student support outside of the regular school year, such as for the summer term or after-school programs, or if they only serve students in particular demographic groups, such as undocumented students or foster youth.

Most College Promise programs in California, like those across the country, are relatively new, with the earliest California programs having started during the early- to mid-2000s. Mirroring program creation across the nation, California’s College Promise programs grew gradually until 2016, when 10 new programs were launched. Twenty new programs followed in fall 2017, resulting in 42 programs that met the criteria for inclusion in this analysis. (See appendix D for the characteristics of the individual programs.)

Community Colleges and College Promise. Community colleges are central to the growth of the College Promise movement in California. Of the state’s 42 College Promise programs, all but one is led by a community college or is operating in partnership with a community college. Even that single program without a community college lead or partner requires that participants attend a California community college. Most (38) of the programs require that, to qualify for participation, students attend either a specific community college or a college within a specified community college district.

Two of the other programs, the Richmond and Oakland Promise programs, offer students the flexibility to use the financial award at any two- or four-year public or private university in the United States. A third program, San Marcos Promise (PACE), requires that participants attend a particular California State University, CSU, San Marcos.

Financial Assistance. California College Promise programs are diverse in how they structure and award direct financial assistance to students. The most common type of financial support is based on a last-dollar model, which determines the amount of financial support to students *after* factoring in the

amount they receive from other sources, such as the CCPG. Of the 33 last-dollar programs in California, 17 cover tuition, fees, and books, 9 cover tuition only, and 7 cover tuition and fees.

In the first-dollar model used by some College Promise programs, students receive a financial award regardless of any other financial support they receive. Five of the 42 California programs provide a one-time first-dollar scholarship, and 2 of the 5 determine the amount of the scholarship based on the recipient's tuition fees. Another provides a two-year first-dollar scholarship of \$1,000 per year.

Three additional programs provide financial awards over a longer period of time, specifically for up to four years of college attendance. Of these, two last-dollar programs provide a \$1,000–\$1,500 grant each year, and one first-dollar program gives up to \$4,000 per year if students attend a four-year institution.

One California program that offers a last-dollar scholarship also awards students a stipend if they qualify for the CCPG; this is commonly referred to as a middle-dollar award.

Academic Support and Student Services. In addition to providing financial support, all but 5 of the 42 College Promise programs in this scan provide academic support or other student services as part of the program. Most, but not all, of the supports identified in this section are required for students in order for students to be eligible for or to continue in the program.

The most common student support services provided through California's College Promise programs are academic counseling and advising (28), career counseling (24), and summer orientation or bridge programs (23). Tutoring, mentoring, career counseling/advising, priority registration, and support with FAFSA, Dream Act, and/or College Promise applications are each included in between 11 and 15 programs.

Community Partnerships. College Promise in California has a foundation of strong relationships within education. Just over half (25) of the programs include a K–12 partner, and such partnerships are likely to increase because AB 19 requires community colleges to partner with a local education agency to qualify for funding. Ten California programs that are not based in a four-year institution have a formal partnership with a four-year higher education institution with, for example, guaranteed transfer agreements for qualified students. The CSU system, in particular, has long-standing working relationships with California community colleges, formalized with the California College Promise legislation (S.412, 2016). The CCPP database shows that additional programs collaborate with four-year partners in informal ways, such as hosting campus visits for College Promise students.

Although not as widespread as College Promise partnerships within the education sector, a number of cross-sector partnerships have been developed by California College Promise programs. At the time of the scan, 17 programs had at least one partner outside of education, with organizations such as Kiwanis clubs, rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, and community foundations represented most frequently.

Student Eligibility. Most California College Promise programs are designed to serve any student in a particular geographic area. Of the 42 programs, 40 have defined this eligibility criterion as a specific area smaller than the state, with eligibility typically established by a student's home address and/or high school attended. The other 2 programs are open to any California resident, regardless of where they live.

Two of the 42 programs have need-based requirements and 8 have merit requirements. Most of the programs with merit requirements have a grade point average (GPA) cutoff between 2.0 and 2.5; a few use coursework or an assessment test to determine merit-based eligibility. One such program requires

a GPA of at least 3.5. Two programs require that students have had a 90-percent high school attendance rate to be eligible, which can be seen as a different way of determining merit.

Most California programs target recent high school graduates. More than half (26 of 42) require that students enroll immediately after high school graduation to be eligible; another 4 stipulate that students begin within one year of graduation; and another program allows students to enroll within two years of high school graduation. One program requires college enrollment by age 20, instead of specifying years from high school graduation. A few programs allow exceptions to this type of requirement for students who serve in the military, and 10 of 42 programs do not require students to enroll in college within a particular period of time.

Most programs have enrollment and achievement requirements. Thirty of the 42 programs require program participants to be enrolled full time, which in California is considered to be taking at least 12 units per semester. Two other programs require that students be enrolled more than full time (taking at least 15 units). Another 3 programs allow students to be enrolled less than full time, but require they take a minimum of 9 units. Seven of the 42 programs do not have a minimum unit requirement.

While only 8 programs include high school merit requirements for initial program eligibility, 25 programs require students to achieve a specified minimum GPA in order to maintain eligibility for the financial award from one term or year to the next.

Most (31 of 42) programs also require that students engage with support programs to be eligible for the financial award. Required student services vary and may include meeting with a counselor to develop an academic plan, participating in summer bridge programs, and applying for Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and/or other student support opportunities.

3. What are the perceived outcomes of College Promise in California?

The 15 interviewees were asked about their observations and expectations related to the influence of College Promise programs on student outcomes and the overall mission and organizational structures of higher education institutions. They were also asked about the alignment between College Promise programs and other student support efforts at the participating colleges. Two system-level respondents declined to discuss perceived outcomes of California College Promise on students and institutions, stating that attributing causality would be difficult given the multiple and interrelated initiatives that are being concurrently implemented on community college campuses.

Influence of College Promise

K-12 Student Outcomes. Eight of the 13 interviewees who responded to the question about the influence of College Promise on student outcomes reported believing that a College Promise program will improve student outcomes at the K-12 level. A community college chancellor reported expecting improvement because “nothing but good things happen with more conversation and alignment with K-12 partners.”

Four (of 13) interviewees said they expected College Promise programs to encourage students to see college as an option. According to a respondent from the California State University system, College Promise programs “provide a pathway for students to understand how to get to college.” One K–12 interviewee noted that one way to foster the perception that college is a viable option is to address students’ concerns about paying for it: “They need to know early on that there is some support available, to alleviate mental barriers and let . . . [students] think beyond financial burden.”

Students “need to know early on that there is some support available, to alleviate mental barriers and let [them] think beyond financial burden.”

Interviewees also reported that, when students believe college is in their future, their expectations and motivations can shift, allowing them, as one CCCCCO respondent put it, to “look to a future that is positive.” One K–12 respondent asserted that “if . . . [they] hear . . . early on that college is a possibility, students engage in [school] work a little differently. They feel hopeful. It impacts students’ mindsets.” One community college respondent explained that College Promise “has the potential to impact student options by setting a higher bar . . . and by creating a compact that there are things they need to do [in order] to join Promise.” Some respondents expressed the belief that College Promise programs can also change the views of students’ parents, so that they, too, “understand the pathways to college” for their children, said a CSU respondent.

Interviewees reported their belief that College Promise programs can result in better academic and personal college preparation for students. A Chancellor’s Office respondent said, “A well-designed College Promise program can ensure that students are prepared to do college-level work. They understand how to be a student. They have [the] prerequisite math and English work [needed] to go into transfer-level work.”

College Student Outcomes. All 13 interviewees who responded to the question about student outcomes predicted that College Promise programs will improve college enrollment, persistence, and completion. Two interviewees emphasized that they expected enrollment to increase after a college launches a program. One of them emphasized that targeted outreach to communities would increase the enrollment of students who historically have been underrepresented in higher education.

“Ideally . . . [College Promise] allows a student to reduce the number of hours they have to work, [which] potentially helps them in their academic pursuits.”

Five of the 13 interviewees described the importance of financial support in enabling low-income students, as one community college administrator described it, to “study more and work less.” A community partner explained, “Ideally . . . [College Promise] allows a student to reduce the number of hours they have to work, [which] potentially helps them in their academic pursuits. I think that is a key. And the hope is that it would support persistence because, again, to the extent that you have students who are financially vulnerable, at least the cost of attendance, narrowly defined, [won’t be] part of their responsibility.”

Interviewees had various expectations about the impact of College Promise on students' academic performance. One community college chancellor predicted a positive effect, referring to research at one college showing that College Promise students outperformed their non-College Promise peers. Another administrator, who thinks College Promise programs are generally a good idea, expressed uncertainty about the impact of College Promise on participants' college GPAs, speculating that College Promise might encourage enrollment by students who are not adequately prepared for college.

College Institutional Outcomes. All 15 people who were interviewed for this scan responded to a question about the impact of College Promise programs on the mission, structure, and processes of higher education institutions. Fourteen of them expected to see an impact on the institution associated with the program. The single outlier was a California State University administrator who explained that no changes were anticipated in the CSU because College Promise aligns well with the system's current mission.

College Promise is a “holistic reform that helps break down silos and . . . enhances the way [colleges] operate.”

The other 14 respondents anticipated that College Promise will influence institutional priorities, structures, and processes at the community colleges. Five of the 15 interviewees anticipated a shift in the mission or focus of community colleges. One community partner explained, “At the college level . . . [College Promise] is a catalyst to consider how colleges can provide better access and support, and financial help.” Another interviewee similarly described College Promise as creating a “call to action.” Three interviewees reported that, with College Promise, colleges will shift their focus from enrollment to persistence and completion. According to a CCCCCO representative, College Promise will result in colleges “working with students earlier than ever before.” A community college administrator speculated that colleges may expand their mission because, under the framework of College Promise, they will be serving a broader range of people “regardless of socioeconomic status.”

Interviewees also predicted that the structures of community colleges would change as a result of College Promise programs. About half the interviewees (7 of 15) said they believe that community colleges will develop and strengthen partnerships across education segments (i.e., with K-12, community colleges, and four-year institutions) and across other community sectors (i.e., with local government, business, local nonprofit organizations, and philanthropy) after starting a College Promise program. These interviewees reported expecting that colleges will be more likely to request partnerships with external entities, leading to greater interdependence between colleges, businesses, local nonprofits, and K-12 systems. One interviewee from the community college system office expressed the belief that bringing the education segments together will create “programs that are designed to engage the student prior to entering the college . . . blurring the line between high school and college.” Another explained that working across education segments and community sectors “sounds like a softball of an outcome but it’s not because these are behemoth bureaucracies and [under College Promise] they work together around a shared goal.”

Interviewees also anticipated changes in internal processes at community colleges as a result of having a College Promise program. One community college interviewee explained that College Promise is a “holistic reform that helps break down silos and helps us take a step back and look at the broader

program — which gives us the chance to enhance the way we operate.” Others reported that having a College Promise program has changed financial aid and student support systems at their colleges already. Respondents also referred to other institutional processes that could be affected by College Promise, including communication with students and data gathering and analysis. College Promise programs, according to some interviewees, may also result in colleges having a younger and more diverse student body, which could subsequently encourage changes in the composition of college faculties. In addition to anticipating the need for more faculty members with high levels of cultural competency, some respondents also envisioned an increase in the number of faculty teaching math and English courses.

Alignment With Other Student Success Efforts

All 15 interviewees responded to the question about the ways in which College Promise programs align with other student success efforts. Two of them explained that the relationship varies by campus and district. Another three expressed the belief that these efforts are aligned to some degree (i.e., “in many ways,” “very closely,” “tightly”).

Seven of the 15 offered deeper insights into the relationship between College Promise and other initiatives, with 4 describing College Promise as providing a broad framework for student support. A representative from local government called College Promise a “college readiness framework,” while a representative from the CCCCCO described it as part of the “overarching conversation” that ensures program alignment and “gives simplicity to the complexity of all the initiatives underway.”

Five of the 15 described College Promise in relation to the Guided Pathways initiative. Interviewees described College Promise as “a key part of,” “aligning closely,” and “aligning tightly with” Guided Pathways, but articulated differences between the two. One community college interviewee described Guided Pathways as the “overarching campus-wide strategy” and College Promise as the program that “consciously links K-12 to community colleges to four-year [institutions].” A CCCCCO representative stated, “College Promise can be viewed as *overarching* Guided Pathways, as well as being *part* of Guided Pathways” [emphasis added].

4. What is the perceived future of College Promise in California?

One hundred fifty-four respondents (all 15 interviewees and 139 of the 141 survey respondents) offered their perceptions about the long-term viability of College Promise. Two additional questions about the future of College Promise, not on the survey, were asked during the interviews. The first inquired about the impact of AB 19 on program development and expansion (10 interviewees responded) and the second asked about any perceived resistance or threats to the future of College Promise in California (all 15 responded).

General Thoughts About College Promise Viability in California

In response to this open-ended question about long-term program viability, most survey and interview respondents (70 percent, or 104 of 154) reported believing that College Promise programs will

remain over time. Thirty percent (46 out of 154) expressed uncertainty, and only 4 respondents said they did not expect College Promise programs to last.

Broad Optimism About College Promise Future. Among those who expressed the belief that College Promise programs will last, a range of explanations were offered including national and state momentum; demand from students, parents, and industry; the programs’ focus on equity; and evidence of success.

The most common explanation (21 survey respondents) referred to the current state- and national-level momentum around College Promise. One community college respondent acknowledged that some programs lack financial sustainability, but that the model is “powerful and clearly has great momentum at the moment.” Thirteen other respondents pointed to political support for College Promise at the local and state levels, noting in particular the recent passage of College Promise legislation (AB 19). One respondent speculated that there would be “political blowback if something inexpensive like this goes away.” Nine respondents said they see the momentum around College Promise fueled by the close alignment between College Promise and other cross-sector and community-based efforts. One community college representative stressed the role of “system priorities and initiatives, such as the work we are currently engaged in with Guided Pathways.”

“[College Promise programs are] all about helping our students complete.”

Respondents also expected College Promise programs to last because the programs respond to local and state needs, including concerns about the cost of a college education. As one community college respondent wrote, “Most College Promise programs provide at least some relief [for] the cost burdens of low- and low-middle income families.” College Promise programs are also believed to address the need for an educated workforce. One community college administrator described, “The current and past [college access] practices are just not getting it done. We are not supporting our communities and local economic development if we do not find better ways to impact college transitions and higher education attainment.”

About 12 percent of all respondents (18 of 154) believed that College Promise programs will last because they align with equity priorities at the state, system, community, and college levels. According to one community college respondent, College Promise “reinforces the notion that community college is an equitable community resource; it’s also an important way for DACA students to receive financial assistance since they do not qualify for federal aid.” Respondents explained that the programs send the message to all members of the community that college is a viable option. “The idea [of College Promise] is here to stay,” one K-12 respondent explained, “because [these programs] are providing value, especially in communities of color and low-income communities.”

Nine respondents reported that College Promise programs are likely to last because they are yielding positive outcomes. A respondent from the California State University system stated that College Promise will continue because it combines advising, mentoring, and scholarships to help students persist and complete higher education. A K-12 respondent stressed the benefits of providing “support, guidance, and assistance for our students.” A community college respondent reports that College Promise is “all about helping our students complete.” Others referred to the success of their own programs or of

programs in other states. A respondent from a local government explained, “I believe that our track record in California increases the likelihood that they are here to stay.”

Conditions Identified for Program Sustainability. About 30 percent (46 of 154) of respondents felt that College Promise programs would last under certain conditions. Of these respondents, more than half (29 of 46) stressed the need for adequate political and financial support. The factors that place programs at risk of losing support, they explained, include a lack of local fundraising capacity, especially given competing priorities, and a lack of sustained political support, particularly during recessions. One community college respondent who expressed concern about program sustainability, particularly questioning ongoing legislative support, noted that *if* the state were to “truly” fund College Promise programs, colleges could focus their fundraising efforts on program features that are not covered, such as books and transportation.

Six respondents felt that the future of College Promise depends on programs having a clear and simple design, name, and messaging so as to minimize confusion among students, parents, and donors. Explaining the potential for confusion, one community college respondent expressed concern that the College Promise name is “being diluted to mean so many things that [the programs] may be rendered meaningless and indistinguishable from other campus programs.” Respondents identified a number of other factors as being critical to program sustainability, including the involvement of committed leaders and partners and a “thoughtful” and flexible design. One CCCCCO respondent stated, “To the extent that the effort remains flexible and dynamic to the local institutions, . . . and that it will interact with other things going on . . . it is likely to succeed.”

Two respondents expressed the belief that long-term sustainability will depend on whether the programs are financially stable and produce desired outcomes. “If numerous programs fail,” said one community college respondent, “there will be more damage done to the College Promise name.” Others pointed to the need to demonstrate results and communicate measures of success, such as college enrollment and completion. A College Promise community partner explained, “At first, improving [college] access will be enough to keep programs alive . . . but if graduation rates do not improve significantly at scale, the movement can’t sustain long-term partners and mega-donors.”

One CCCCCO respondent explained the importance to the future of the programs of giving students the support they need to reach their academic goals: “It is a pivotal time for Promise programs. If they are focused on student completion and meeting students’ needs . . . then they are here to stay. But if it is ‘gimmicky’ free college . . . it will have a difficult time making a meaningful impact.”

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Some Pessimism for Future. Four respondents expressed skepticism about College Promise programs lasting. One community college respondent reported promoting Guided Pathways over College Promise: “I think we need to move away from the ‘Promise’ language and deliver the results through our work in Guided Pathways.” Another community college respondent expressed concern that College

Promise is a “money loser,” and that new state-level College Promise funding will cover tuition for students from the “upper middle class.” A K-12 respondent reported that College Promise, like similar past programs, will “come and go, especially [because it has] money connected to it,” implying that if state funding dries up, College Promise programs will not be financially viable.

Impact of AB 19

The 2017 passage of Assembly Bill 19 (AB 19), establishing the California College Promise, signaled state support for the College Promise model in California. Although the governor has since allocated \$46 million to the program, for 2018/19, during the data-gathering phase of the scan for this project, AB 19 funding had not yet been allocated. Five of the 15 interviewees asked about the potential effects of the legislation were either unaware of it or said they were not comfortable predicting its impact on the field. Among the 10 respondents who knew about AB 19, some predicted positive impacts and others predicted negative impacts.

Some interviewees speculated that AB 19 would help make College Promise a reality. One community partner said that it offered “hope for staying power” and “made [College Promise] a lot more real.” A K-12 respondent expressed the belief that the new legislation would “institutionalize [College Promise] as a moral imperative that people need to pay attention to.”

Some interviewees also expressed hope that the passage of AB 19 would lead to increased clarity around the definition of College Promise and to an increase in the number of programs. Other interviewees said they expected that if College Promise programs were established in most community colleges, they would lead to a systemwide increase in financial aid applications (because such applications are required for all program participation), enrollment, persistence, and completion, especially for underrepresented students.

However, a few interviewees conveyed concern about passage of AB 19 legislation, especially with regard to program structures and messaging. One community college respondent expressed worry that AB 19 had the potential to hurt existing programs because it had been “highly oversold and poorly messaged,” so that it is “confusing to our donor community.” Another respondent said that, although “money will help to galvanize the movement . . . it’s not clear how [College Promise] will be defined, managed, and held to compliance.”

Specific Concerns About College Promise

The 15 interviewees were asked if they anticipate any resistance or threats to College Promise programs. (The survey did not include this question.) Thirteen of the 15 who responded expressed some concerns.

Six interviewees said that inadequate funding and/or a lack of financial stability threaten College Promise program sustainability. One community college respondent asserted that “it is difficult to raise funding to cover the costs of comprehensive programs,” in part due to what the respondent referred to as “unpredictability of the *philanthropic sector*.” A CCCC respondent further speculated that future funding levels and flexibility could be affected if state lawmakers determined expenditures were not properly aligned to the AB 19 goals of improving student equity and outcomes.

A few interviewees also expressed concern that the way programs are structured can put the growth of College Promise as a whole at risk. Interviewees highlighted several factors they see as potential weaknesses, including the absence of comprehensive student support (3), a lack of collaboration within colleges and with external partners (2), the exclusion of adult students, meaning students who do not attend college directly after high school graduation (1), and “disproportionately support[ing] less needy students” (2).

Four interviewees expressed the belief that state funding may be discontinued if colleges do not comply with the requirements of AB 19. According to the legislation, students must be enrolled full time and participating colleges must offer a federal loan program. Focusing on equity, one community college representative speculated that requiring full-time enrollment for program participants may work against helping those students who most need the program because many low-income students must work and, thus, can only attend college part-time. The potential result, the respondent added, is that the requirement could cause programs “to turn our backs on the . . . populations we serve.”

Interviewees also worried about the lack of clarity in the definition and messaging around College Promise at the state level. Some expressed concern that, without guidance, programs may be poorly designed, which may lead to weak outcomes, further threatening program success.

5. What are the College Promise technical assistance needs and preferred delivery modes?

To learn about the professional development needs of individuals affiliated with College Promise programs, the research team included a question about the issue in both the survey and the interview protocol. The question asked respondents and interviewees to select from six options, as well as to add their own responses. There was no limit to the number of options respondents could select. One hundred thirty-nine survey respondents and 10 interviewees responded to this prompt.

Identified Technical Assistance Needs

Figure 1. Identified Technical Assistance Needs (N=149)

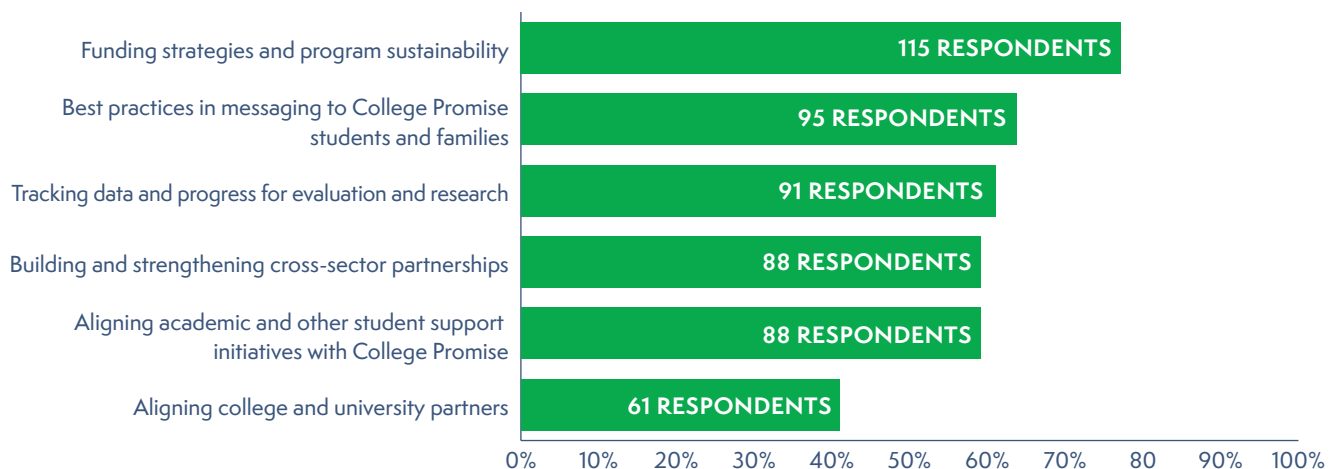


Figure 1 shows that the most frequently selected professional development topic was *funding strategies and program sustainability*. One community college respondent said, “We need help with fundraising strategies and how to make College Promise fiscally sustainable, especially because of the overlap [with] Guided Pathways . . . ” Another community college representative described the need to “leverage other categorical funding to support a Promise program.”

“[The field needs] clear communication about what we mean by a Promise program.”

Almost 100 respondents were interested in learning more about *best practices in messaging to College Promise students and families*. One CCCCO representative explained, “They [i.e., the field] need clear communication about what we mean by a Promise program. They can and should define it in a local-oriented way, but there should be some underlying tenets that are required.”

Tracking data and progress for evaluation and research was also an important professional development topic to respondents. One community college respondent emphasized the need to understand data and measurement to make decisions around program development. The respondent expressed an interest in having “. . . real conversations on data and measurement about what is meaningful and what we know. The baseline assumptions on programs are radically different at times. We need education on that piece. Also, a lot of program development choices are based on data and evidence.”

A respondent specifically noted the need for research in districts “that don’t have robust research departments to determine whether they [College Promise programs] are working or not.”

Building and strengthening cross-sector partnerships was a topic of interest for 88 respondents. One K–12 community partner wrote: “K–12 counselors need to be brought together with higher education policy-makers and counselors to get everyone on the same page and to collaborate around messaging and training each other on how different systems work and how to bridge whatever divides they see popping up.”

Eighty-eight respondents also requested help to align College Promise with other academic and student support efforts in their institutions, and 61 said they needed help in aligning college and university partners.

In their open-ended responses to the question about professional learning needs, respondents identified some additional topics. Five respondents wanted exemplars or models of successful College Promise programs. One community college respondent reported being eager to have “interaction with those who are doing Promise successfully.” Similarly, a respondent from a College Promise partner requested information on “evaluations and best practices from [other College Promise] programs across the country at a deeper level than usually given.”

Two respondents described the need for training that reinforces and centers on equity. One community college respondent explained the reason why this type of professional development is important: “I think Promise programs are based on fundamental human rights and not everyone thinks this way.” Another community college respondent discussed the need for professional learning that includes a “focus on student success and equity...not [being] discriminatory of students who are disadvantaged.”

Technical Assistance Delivery Modes

Survey respondents and interviewees were also asked to report their preferred ways of engaging in technical assistance. A list of six options was offered, with the opportunity to provide additional suggestions. Survey respondents were permitted to check as many options as they wanted. One hundred thirty-nine survey respondents and 10 interviewees responded to this question.

Figure 2. Preferred Technical Assistance Delivery Modes (N = 149)

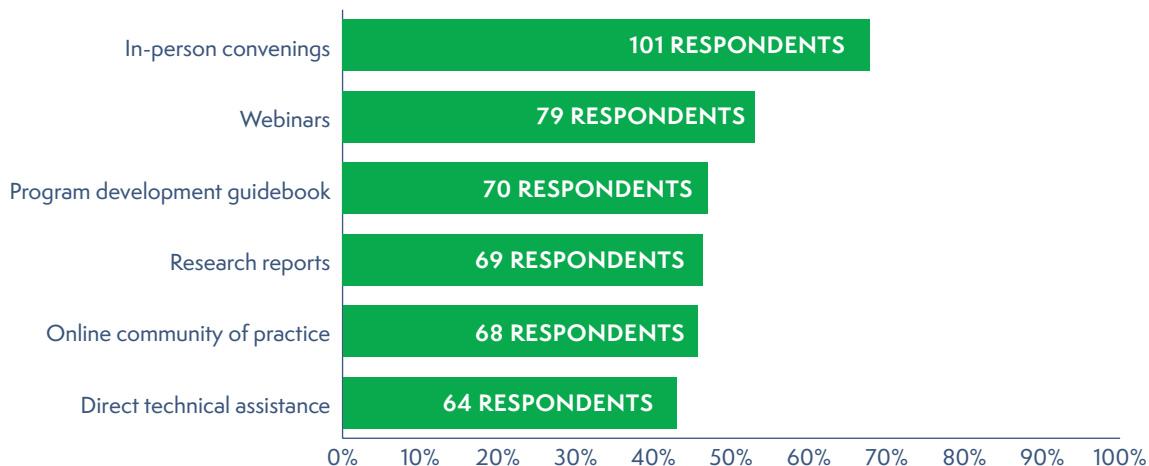


Figure 2 shows that in-person convenings were the most preferred approach for delivery of College Promise support. Interviewees elaborated that seminars, workshops, and regional training sessions would all be welcomed and should be structured so that “best practices and challenges can be reviewed.” One community college respondent pointed to regional trainings as ideal because “there is a geographic orientation and we can include local policies and build relationships with local practitioners.”

Other respondents noted the need for ongoing and in-person cross-sector training. One K-12 partner talked about the importance of regular meetings and recommended “providing collaborative opportunities to meet quarterly or every other month to bring together K-12, including middle school, and community college counselors together.” This respondent went on to say that “counselors need more [professional development] or training on how to go into classrooms and teach.”

Survey respondents and interviewees also reported interest in other types of professional learning supports, including a program development guidebook. A CCCCCO interviewee called for a guidebook that is “explicit about what is helpful and what is not.” One community college representative expressed the opinion that “the initial program book [i.e., the California College Promise Profile Booklet developed by REL West at WestEd] produced at the very first Promise conference was especially helpful.”

DISCUSSION

In recent years, California has experienced dramatic proliferation of College Promise programs. This growth has built on the state's historical commitment to affordable and accessible higher education and recent legislation specifically pertaining to College Promise.

The structure and scope of College Promise programs in California vary. The state is home to several programs that have existed for more than 10 years (e.g., Ventura College Promise and Long Beach College Promise), and to many new and emerging programs. The 42 programs included in this analysis vary by student eligibility requirements, program features, organizational structure, and types of partners. Such variation is not surprising, given the local and grassroots nature of the College Promise, which allows programs the flexibility to meet local needs. Despite this variation, some common themes emerge from the collected data.

First, community colleges play a central role in California College Promise. All but one of the 42 programs identified in this report is either led by, or implemented in partnership with, a community college.

Second, California College Promise programs typically provide a last-dollar financial aid award that covers tuition, fees, and books for one year of college attendance.

Third, the financial awards are usually available only to high school graduates who live or attend school in a specified location and enroll in college immediately after graduating from high school.

Fourth, in addition to offering students a financial award, California College Promise programs provide student support to promote college success and completion. They describe College Promise as a “framework” for student support that aligns multiple student success initiatives. Almost 90 percent of programs in this scan include student support in their program design and almost 75 percent of those programs require students to engage in support services in order to receive a financial award.

Fifth, another defining characteristic of College Promise programs in California is the formal collaboration across educational segments (K-12, community colleges, and four-year institutions) and community sectors (including local government, business, local nonprofit organizations, and philanthropy). Interview and survey respondents expect an increase in partnerships across education segments because the California College Promise legislation (AB 19) requires community colleges to partner with a local education agency (LEA) to receive funding.

Interviewees perceived that College Promise will benefit students as well as the state's education systems. They reported expecting College Promise to positively influence the motivation and outcomes of K-12 students, as well as their college enrollment, persistence, and completion. All but one interviewee⁶

6 The exception was a CSU respondent who felt that College Promise was already tightly aligned with the CSU mission.

also expected College Promise to positively influence the mission, structures, and processes at the state's community colleges. They reported that they anticipate a greater focus on student equity and success; better internal collaboration among initiatives and departments so as to streamline and improve the student experience; and stronger partnerships with the community and among education segments.

Some survey respondents and interviewees expressed worry about the political and financial sustainability of California College Promise. Nonetheless, most articulated a belief that College Promise would last, due to community interest, recent state legislation, and positive outcomes from existing programs.

Concerns, Cautions, and Next Steps

The primary concerns about California's College Promise articulated by survey and interview respondents centered around its financial sustainability and the development of quality programs. More data and research are needed to assess the outcomes of California College Promise programs with different design features, with results used to inform understanding of the ideal approaches for creating and sustaining high-quality College Promise programs.

Study respondents emphasized College Promise program goals and features that lead to increased student equity, such as an intentional focus on student persistence and success; the importance of financial support to allow students to work less hours during the school year; and K-12 academic support to ensure students are college ready. However, few respondents explicitly connected College Promise and student equity. It may be that this connection is simply assumed because it is foundational to their College Promise work, or perhaps the dearth of specific references to equity is an artifact of the survey and interview protocol because no items directly called out equity. In any case, given the demographic characteristics of students in the state, and the emphasis on equity in the goals outlined in CCCC's Vision for Success (<https://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/o/Reports/vision-for-success.pdf>) and in AB 19 legislation (<https://californiacollegepromise.wested.org/resources/ab-19-resources/>), the lack of explicit attention to equity is worth further exploration.

More data and research are also needed in order to understand how community colleges are (or are not) providing the student supports that College Promise participants need if they are to succeed in college. The same is true for understanding the collaborative dimensions of California College Promise, specifically, the extent to which strong partnerships across education segments and community sectors can affect student education outcomes. Finally, it is important to explore the effect of AB 19 on the development and expansion of California College Promise programs in California, as well as the relative effects of various program features on student outcomes.

The philanthropic community can play an important role during this period of rapid College Promise program growth. Supporting new research projects can expand our collective knowledge about the ways that College Promise programs across the state affect students, institutions, and communities. Research is only one part of the equation, however. Support is also needed to provide convenings, webinars, and other professional development structures that guide teams to frame, design, communicate, evaluate, and implement robust and equitable College Promise programs throughout California.

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APPENDIX A: METHODS

This scan draws on multiple sources of data to capture the California College Promise landscape and the perceptions of College Promise in the field. The following five research questions guided the analysis.

1. What is the vision of California College Promise?
2. What are the characteristics of existing College Promise programs in California?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of College Promise in California?
4. What is the perceived future of College Promise in California?
5. What are the support and technical assistance needs of the field surrounding College Promise program design, implementation, and evaluation?

The methods for the landscape scan are presented in two sections. The first section describes the processes for gathering College Promise program data on the 42 programs; the second outlines the steps taken to gather and analyze the perceptions data.

Gathering data on California College Promise programs

California College Promise programs that are included in this landscape scan have the following characteristics:

- » Students are given direct financial support for college costs.⁷
- » Students are eligible based on where they live or attend school.
- » The program started serving students by fall 2017.
- » The program is designed to serve all students who meet the program's eligibility criteria, with no limit on the number of students who can receive the support.⁸

Program data were gathered directly from program websites and information included in press releases and articles identified through Google alerts. The research team validated information with program staff, when possible. Some program staff's knowledge about the intricacies of the program may be limited. Data on support services were particularly difficult to identify. Some but not all of the

7 Programs that only offer a financial award outside of the college standard academic year, such as small stipends for summer coursework or tuition for college coursework for high school students, were excluded from the analysis.

8 This parameter makes a distinction between programs that are designed to serve all eligible students and programs where there is a competitive process to receive a limited number of scholarships. Pilot programs that have started with a limited number of spots but intend to expand as defined above were included.

support services are offered to program participants but are not required for program enrollment or continuation.

Gathering data on perceptions of College Promise in California

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to recruit research participants for this study. This technique is used to identify and select individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this case, the research team first reached out to key stakeholders in WestEd's CCPP database of contacts. The sample included respondents from the following categories: community college district or college; community college foundation; K-12; community partner; local government; CSU system; community college trustees; industry partners; and students. The description of respondents for each category is included in appendix B.

The research team gathered data through surveys and interviews. The survey items included both multiple choice and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to define and elaborate on their thoughts and perceptions in some cases. A draft of the survey items was derived from existing knowledge of College Promise in California, and other College Promise studies, and was reviewed by research scholars and community college experts. Feedback from the reviewers was incorporated into the final survey, and the 17-item survey was administered through Google forms to the 528 stakeholders in CCPP's database. After one week, a follow-up email was sent as a reminder to complete the survey. From the 528 individuals to whom the survey was sent, CCPP received 141 responses, for a response rate of 27 percent. After the initial data collection, the research team sought to gather additional information from K-12 and local government leaders; to identify those leaders, the team requested nominations from College Promise program leads. This latter process resulted in the addition of 19 K-12 survey respondents and two K-12 interviewees, as well as 5 local government survey respondents and one local government interviewee. The following table presents the survey respondent categories and number of respondents per category. (The survey and interview items are listed in appendix C.)

Table A1. Survey Respondents by Category

Category	Number of Respondents = 141
Community College District or College	75
Community College Foundation	27
K-12	19
Community Partner	7
Local Government	5
CSU System	4
Community College Trustees	2
Industry Partners	1
Students	1

The interview protocol mirrored the content of the survey, with minor wording adjustments and additional opportunities to probe for deeper understanding. A total of 15 individuals participated in the interviews, with each interview lasting about one hour. The following table lists the number of interviewees in each category.

Table A2. Interview Respondents by Category

Interview Participants	Number of Interviewees
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office	5
Community College District or College	4
Community College Foundation	1
K-12	2
Community Partner	1
Local Government	1
CSU	1

Total number of interviewees = 15

The research team employed qualitative content analysis through *a priori* and emergent coding of interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses. *A priori* codes were derived from the review of the literature, while emergent codes were established following a preliminary examination of the qualitative data. Two researchers independently coded a subset of the interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses, then compared coding patterns to determine inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability was estimated by calculating the proportion of agreement across code applications. The researchers revised the codebook based on these initial tests and continued to iterate until a high level of agreement was reached. All transcripts and responses were then recoded using the revised codebook. Data generated from this activity were synthesized and categorized to identify common themes and patterns that addressed the research questions.

Study Limitations

The results presented in this report represent the views of the 15 individuals who agreed to be interviewed and the 141 individuals who responded to the survey, and, thus, are unlikely to be representative of the views of all individuals who are involved with California College Promise programs. The findings are intended to present a foundation for understanding the landscape of California College Promise.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

In this report, survey and interview respondents are categorized based on their self-reported role and position title.

Community College System (CC system): Respondents who are state-level community college leaders, such as employees of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) or members of the CCCCCO Board of Governors.

Community College (CC): Staff who are employed by a community college, college, or district presidents/chancellors and other administrators, faculty, etc., regardless of whether their college or district has an active College Promise program. Institutional researchers, community college trustees, and staff of community college foundations are not included in this category.

Community College Foundation (CC Foundation): All staff in a community college foundation with the CC foundation, including executive directors, staff, and foundation board members. These might be program leads, program partners, or program funders.

K-12: Elementary, middle, and high school leaders, such as California Department of Education (CDE) employees; College Promise staff employed by a K-12 institution and any individuals who represent K-12 institutions that partner with a College Promise program. K-12 institutions include (but are not limited to) elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, K-12 or high school districts, and charter and private schools.

Community Partners: Respondents from any non-governmental, community foundation, chamber of commerce, volunteer group, or other nonprofit organization that is not directly managed by a college or university, with the exception of community college foundation employees. Community organizations may lead or be community partners for a College Promise program.

Local Government: Representatives of any city council, mayor's office, county government officials, or other government official (other than state-level officials) that lead or partner with a College Promise program.

California State University (CSU): Leaders, staff, or board members of the state-level CSU system as well as staff employed by a CSU, including college presidents or other administrators and those staffing the College Promise program.

Community College Trustees (Trustee): Trustees of community college districts.

Industry Partners: Funders, partners, or program leads that are based in the business sector.

Students: Current community college or CSU students.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW ITEMS

Interview Items

How do you define College Promise?

To what extent do you think College Promise is here to stay and why?

In what ways do you think College Promise programs do or could impact student outcomes?

In what ways do you think College Promise programs are changing or have the potential to change the goals and structures in higher education institutions?

In what ways do College Promise programs align with other student success efforts such as counseling/ advising, guided pathways, multiple measures, and student equity?

Do you see any resistance or threats to College Promise programs?

If yes:

What forms do the threats or resistance take? What groups are most resistant and why?

In what ways do you think AB 19 will impact College Promise program development or expansion?

What type of professional development would be helpful for the field as they develop or expand College Promise programs?

Please describe the ideal delivery mode for the technical assistance described above.

Survey Items

Email address

Name

Institution or Organization

Phone number

Please write your definition of College Promise.

Are you currently involved in a College Promise program (Y/N)

If yes,

What is the name of the program?

Is the program active (i.e., currently granting financial, academic, and/or other services to students) or under development? (Active/Under development)

If no,

Do you or your colleagues plan to develop a College Promise program in the future?

What type of professional development would be helpful for you or others to have as you develop or expand your program? *(please select all that apply)*

Best practices in messaging the Promise to students and families

Building and strengthening cross-sector partnerships

Aligning academic and other student support initiatives with College Promise

Tracking data and progress for evaluation and research

Aligning internal college/university partners

Funding strategies and program sustainability

Other:

What are the best ways for you or others to get the technical assistance you need? *(please select all that apply).*

In-person convenings

Direct technical assistance

Online community of practice

Webinars

A program development guidebook

Research reports

Other:

Do you think College Promise programs are here to stay?

Yes/No/Not sure?

Why/Why not?

APPENDIX D: DATA TABLES FOR CALIFORNIA COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAMS

Table D1. Overview of California College Promise Programs (Fall 2017)

Program Name	First Year that Scholarships were Awarded	College or University to Attend	Years of Coverage	Disbursement of Financial Support
Barstow College Promise	2017	Barstow Community College	1	last dollar
Cerritos Complete	2016	Cerritos College	1	last dollar
Cerro Coso Promise	2017	Cerro Coso College (CC Online, Edwards Air Force Base, Lake Isabella, Ridgecrest/ Indian Wells Valley, and Tehachapi campuses)	2	first dollar
Coastline College Promise	2017	Coastline College	1	last dollar
College of Alameda Promise	2016	College of Alameda	1	last dollar
College of the Canyons First-Year Promise (FYP)	2017	College of the Canyons	1	last dollar
Corcoran Promise	2016	West Hills College Coalinga, West Hills College Lemoore	1	last dollar
Cuesta Promise	2014	Cuesta College	1+	last dollar
Folsom Lake College/Rancho Cordova College Promise	2017	Folsom Lake College	1	first dollar
Free City	2017	City College San Francisco	2	first dollar
Inyo Promise	2014	Cerro Coso College (Bishop Campus)	2+	last dollar
Kern Promise	2017	Bakersfield College	2	last dollar
Long Beach College Promise	2008	Long Beach City College	1	first dollar
Los Angeles Promise	2017	Any college in LA CCD (East LA College, LA City College, LA Harbor College, LA Mission College, LA Pierce College, LA Southwest College, LA Trade-Tech College, LA Valley College, West LA College)	1	last dollar
Mammoth Lakes Foundation Scholarship	2003	Cerro Coso College (Mammoth Lakes Campus)	2	last dollar
Mira Costa Promise	2017	Mira Costa College	1	last dollar
Moreno Valley College Promise Initiative	2017	Moreno Valley College	1	last dollar
Oakland Promise	2016	Any 2- or 4-year college in the US. Larger award at all Peralta CCD colleges, guaranteed admission to CSU East Bay if students meet merit eligibility requirements.	4	first dollar

Program Name	First Year that Scholarships were Awarded	College or University to Attend	Years of Coverage	Disbursement of Financial Support
Ohlone Promise	2012	Ohlone College	2	last dollar
Ontario Community College Promise	2017	All California Community Colleges	2	last dollar
Ontario-Montclair Promise Scholarship	2017	Chaffey College	1	last dollar
Oxnard Promise	2017	Oxnard College	1	last dollar
Palomar Promise	2017	Palomar College	1	last dollar
Pasadena City College Promise (PCC Promise)	2017	Pasadena City College	1	last dollar
pLEDGE	2017	College of the Desert	2	last dollar
Richmond Promise	2016	Any 2- or 4-year college and/or pursue a Career Technical Education Certificate at any not-for-profit institution in the US.	4	last dollar
Rio Hondo College Promise	2017	Rio Hondo College	1	last dollar
Riverside City College (RCC) Promise	2017	Riverside City College	1	last dollar
San Diego Promise	2016	San Diego City, San Diego Mesa, San Diego Miramar	1	last dollar
San Jose Promise	2017	San Jose City, Evergreen Valley College	2	last dollar
San Marcos Promise (PACE)	2009	CSU San Marcos (4-year university)	4	last dollar
Santa Ana College Promise	2016	Santa Ana College	1	last dollar
Santa Barbara City College Promise	2016	Santa Barbara City College	2	last dollar
Santa Cruz County College Commitment (S4C)	2012	Cabrillo College	1 semester	first dollar
Siskiyou Promise	2016	College of the Siskiyous	2	last dollar
South Bay Promise	2014	El Camino College	1	last dollar
Southwestern College Promise	2017 (pilot)	Southwestern College	1	first dollar
Valley-Bound Commitment	2008	San Bernardino Valley College	1	last dollar
Ventura College Promise	2006	Ventura College	1	last dollar
West Hills CCD President's Scholars	1998	West Hills College Coalinga, West Hills College Lemoore (all district colleges)	2	last dollar
West Sacramento Promise	2017	Sacramento City College	1	last dollar
West Valley College Community Grant	2016	West Valley Community College	1/2 year	first dollar



California College Promise

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS
AND PERCEPTIONS FROM
THE FIELD

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