The Role of College Promise Programs In Promoting Labor Market Outcomes

Laura Perna
University of Pennsylvania
www.ahead-penn.org
@lauraperna1
Promise Program Are Being Created Across the United States

Year Range
- 1968 - 1989
- 1990 - 1999
- 2000 - 2009
- 2010 - 2014
- 2015 - 2016
- In Progress

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What is a Promise Program?

Working definition:

• Incentivize attainment by rewarding students in a particular place who satisfy specified criteria

Questions:

• What is being “promised”? What is the “reward”?
• What is required to get the promised reward?
• Who is eligible for the promised reward?

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Theory of Change: Financial Aid Programs

- Financial resources
- College attainment
- Labor market benefits

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Theory of Change:
College Promise Programs

“Local” Context

Financial resources

College attainment

Labor market benefits

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College Attainment Varies by State: 2008
Percent of Adults Age 25 and Older with at Least an Associate’s Degree

College Attainment Varies by County: 2015
Percent of Adults Age 25 and Older with at Least an Associate’s Degree


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Our Project

- Upjohn Institute
- Civic Nation
- Research
- Articles

Population

Program Characteristics
- Existing reports
- News articles
- Program websites
- Program outreach

Products
- Searchable database
- Program typology
- Recommendations

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Acknowledgements

Research Team:
• Laura Perna and Elaine Leigh
• Roman Ruiz, Kata Orosz, Steph Carroll, Glen Casey, Vanessa Khoo, Devon Hernandez, Ashley Napier, Destiny McLennan

Financial Support:
• Civic Nation
• Sage Scholars
• Penn-Wharton Public Policy Initiative

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Searchable Database of Promise Programs
http://www.ahead-penn.org/creating-knowledge/college-promise

College Promise Programs

With financial support from Civic Nation, this project is designed to advance research-based understanding of College Promise programs in the United States.

What is a College Promise program?
Over the last decade—but especially in the past few years—programs with the "promise" label have been advanced at local, state, and federal levels. These programs are designed to increase college attainment in particular places. The Kalamazoo Promise program.
Varying Definitions of “Place”

- State: 58%
- County: 11%
- City: 6%
- College Service District: 6%
- School District: 10%
- Other: 9%

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In Progress: A Typology of Promise Programs

What are meaningful “types” of programs?

What are characteristics of different program types?

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Will College Promise Programs Promote Labor Market Outcomes?

• Do programs increase higher education attainment for individuals who would not otherwise enroll in college?

• What higher education outcomes do they promote?
  – Community college? Four-year degree?

• Do they promote local economic development and/or produce other benefits for communities?

• What are the intended and unintended effects of programs for other stakeholders (e.g., K12 schools, higher education institutions)?
Reduce Gaps in Attainment

Bachelor's Degree Attainment of 2002 10th Graders by 2012

- Lowest quartile: 15%
- Second quartile: 22%
- Third quartile: 37%
- Highest quartile: 60%

Recognize the Multiple Barriers to College Attainment


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Recognize the “Place” or Contexts in Which Students Are Embedded

Next Steps

• Research Conference: “Improving Research-Based Knowledge of College Promise Programs”

• October 19-20, 2017, University of Pennsylvania

• Support from the
  – Education Research Conferences Program of the American Educational Research Association (AERA)
  – WestEd
  – College Promise Campaign
  – PennAHEAD
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Learn More

http://ahead-penn.org/creating-knowledge/college-promise

Contact Us

Laura W. Perna
University of Pennsylvania
Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy
lperna@upenn.edu | @PennAHEAD | @lauraperna1
Visit our website at capseecenter.org

You can also follow us on Twitter at @capsee and like us on Facebook.

Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment
Teachers College, Columbia University

525 West 120th Street, Box 174, New York, NY 10027

TEL: 212.678.3091 | capsee@columbia.edu