

America's College Promise is Good for Community College Students and Good for America

1) America's College Promise Will Bring More Students into Higher Education

Increased educational attainment is a national imperative. Community colleges are the most efficient and effective route to do that. These colleges deliver a broad array of high-quality educational programs that cost far less than other institutions – the average tuition and fees are just \$3,770 for a full-year, full-time student. America's College Promise (ACP) will send a clear national message that community college education should be as universal as secondary school, and that a college degree can be obtained without crippling debt. The legislation also contains a relatively small, but key program that employs tested strategies to ensure strong student outcomes.

2) America's College Promise Will Help the Financially Neediest Students and Enhance Diversity in Higher Education

The ACP is a "first dollar" program that allows students to use financial aid to meet college expenses beyond tuition and fees, including books, computer, transportation, food, childcare, and housing. It therefore greatly benefits the financially neediest students. It also enhances diversity in higher education because community colleges enroll the highest percentages of Black and Latino and first-generation college students. The legislation further enhances this diversity through support of four-year Minority-Serving Institutions into which community college students often transfer.

3) America's College Promise Will Strengthen America's Workforce

Roughly 30% of all new jobs will require some postsecondary education, but less than a baccalaureate degree. Even before the pandemic, a substantial skills gap existed across key American industries, such as health care, information technology, and teaching, as well as emerging high demand fields like robotics, artificial intelligence, clean energy, logistics and data analysis. The pandemic has altered and added to these needs. The ACP will foster increased participation in these programs and help bolster the economy.

4) America's College Promise Will Enable More Students to Progress Further in Their Postsecondary Education

Community college credits continue to be needlessly rejected by four-year colleges, undermining academic outcomes and unnecessarily adding to student and government costs. The ACP will change that by guaranteeing seamless community college transfer to public four-year institutions. This change is critical because evidence shows that community colleges students perform as well as students who initially enroll at four-year colleges, but the denial of community college credits sharply reduces those students' subsequent academic success.

5) America's College Promise Will Ensure that States Contribute Their Fair Share to Higher Education

The ACP legislation conditions federal support on a significant state match. States also must meet a maintenance-of-effort requirement on existing expenditures. As part of this federal-state partnership, states will eliminate tuition and fees for eligible community college students irrespective of the current tuition. The "mandatory" federal expenditure will provide necessary program stability.

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