



Cradle-to-Career Data and Tools Advisory Board Proposal Form

Instructions:

Per the [Governance Manual](#) proposal forms submitted will address significant gaps regarding whether the data system is providing access to actionable information. Please note there should only be one proposal per form.

Name:

Meredith Curry Nuñez

Proposal Title: *no more than 50 characters*

Enhance College Promise definition

- By checking this box, I understand that if a Data and Tools Advisory Board member sponsors my proposal, it will be considered as a submission from the Data and Tools Advisory Board member.

Type of Proposal¹:

- Changes to practical tools for students (*Complete section one*)
- Adding data points not available through the P20W data set or adjusting (including the removal of) the existing P20W data points (*Complete section two*)

¹ The C2C Governance Manual notes that DTAB members can also submit recommendations related to the data request process and changes to tools such as dashboards. As the data request process and the dashboards are not yet live, those sections have been removed from the version of this form.

- Please note a proposal form(s) can recommend adding one data point or several clearly related data points to the data system.

Section One: Changes to Practical Tools

1.What is the nature of the gap regarding access to actionable information?

2. What type of tool should be developed?

3. How would a tool address the gap?

4. Who would be the likely user(s) of the tool?

5. How does the tool relate to the [mission and vision](#) of C2C?

Section Two: Adding Data Points Not Available Through the P20W Data Set or Adjusting the Existing P20W Data Points

1.Please state the research question of interest that cannot be fully addressed with the [existing data elements](#) in the P20W Data System.

The current data point is called “**Institution Participates in a College Promise Program.**” The objective of this proposal is to explore an updated definition for the data point that can address the different college promise programs in the state. The current definition is “whether the institution waives some or all tuition and fees for some students,” however there are college promise programs that do not fit this definition and the data is limited to 2007-2008. Thus, the

existing data cannot fully address research questions such as *"How many students are or have enrolled in a college promise program in California?"*

Updating/expanding the definition of "college promise" for California will ensure that the state accurately tracks student participation across all college promise programs.

2. How does this research question relate to the [mission and vision](#) of C2C?

C2C's mission is to be a source of actionable data and resources on education and other outcomes, and to expand access to tools and services to navigate the education to employment pipeline.

College Promises are a best practice recognized nationally to support students early in high school to ensure they enroll in college and complete the important milestones needed to succeed. It is critical that C2C expand awareness to this specific service in the communities where they exist.

According to WestEd, "The number of College Promise programs in California almost doubled every year from 2014 to 2018. Multiple factors contributed to this rapid growth, most notably the 2017 legislation instituting financial support for College Promise programs in community colleges, beginning in fall 2018."

(1)

Based on my analysis of data available as of June 2023, there are over 120 college promises across California but it is unclear if they are all currently tracked by existing partners since over 100 promise programs were created after 2008. By enhancing the definition and the data set to incorporate data beyond 2007-2008, the data system can more accurately respond to questions for all students in the state such as:

- *How many students have access to a College Promise program?*
- *Which students participated in a College Promise program that was available to them?*
- *Which students did not participate in a program that was available to them?*
- *How is participation in College Promise programs in the same school*

and legislative districts changing from year-to-year?

- *Which College Promise students are enrolled in which colleges?*
- *What degrees and/or certificates to College Promise students graduate with?*
- *What are the earnings for College Promise students compared to their K-12 peers from the same school district?*
- *What are the earnings for College Promise students compared to their college peers from the same campus?*

Our students, families, educators, and colleges need to be aware of the college promise programs in their community if they are to leverage these services to improve college and career outcomes.

Sources:

(1) Refer to

<https://californiacollegepromise.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CCPP-Research-Brief-2-022720-final.pdf>.

3. Please propose additional data element(s) needed in order to successfully address the research question of interest.

This proposal requests an expansion of an existing data point, "college promise," from its current definition because it excludes other college promise programs in California. It is important to investigate where the data can be found since currently the only known organizations collecting California college promise data at scale are 1) WestEd in California and 2) the nonprofit College Promise nationally. It's possible that there are different types of college promise programs to track and not all types are tracked in the current metric by current partners.

According to WestEd, "College Promise is an overarching framework for improving college affordability, access, and completion. College Promise programs incentivize college enrollment, persistence, and completion by offering financial, academic, and other support services to students based on where they live or where they attend school." (2)

Based on the C2C element's profile, the data is limited as follows (3):

- Available Years
 - Postsecondary data: 2007-2008
- Data Providers
 - CCC
 - CSU
 - Independents

This proposal seeks to understand how California can best define and measure the availability and impact of college promises across the state.

Sources:

(2) Refer to <https://californiacollegepromise.wested.org/>.

(3)

c2c.ca.gov/data-points/institution-participates-in-a-college-promise-program.

4. Please verify that the proposed data element(s) do not already exist in the P20W Data System.

The data point exists, this proposal is to enhance the definition and the data set.

5. If the P20W Data System does not currently include the proposed data element(s), can the proposed data element(s) be derived from the existing data element(s) in the P20W Data System?

N/A

6. If the P20W Data System does not currently include the proposed data element(s), are there existing data element(s) closely related to the proposed data element(s)? If so, please list them and why they are not sufficient to answer the proposed research question.

N/A

7. C2C keeps a [repository](#) of previous data elements that were either a) considered during the planning process or b) proposed through the mechanisms as outlined in the Governance Manual, but were ultimately not included in the P20W, along with related feasibility studies. Do any of the data element(s) being proposed overlap with the data elements in this repository? (New proposals can build on or duplicate prior proposals. It is helpful for proposers to share that context, including prior related feasibility studies.)

There are no previously submitted data elements in the repository that align or overlap with this request as of April 23, 2025.

8. Are the proposed data element(s) already collected by a state-level entity? For data element(s) already collected, please answer question nine. For data element(s) not collected, please answer question ten.

Yes, by CCC, CSU, and the Independents. (3)

9. [For proposed data element(s) already collected] To the extent possible, please share details pertaining to the proposed data element(s). Relevant details may include but are not limited to: a) corresponding entity that collects and houses the data element(s); b) specific variable name(s) used in the originating data system; and c) timeframe available.

I have not identified a statewide entity who is consistently tracking multiple types of college promises at scale in California besides WestEd. The following are available definitions of "college promise" to start with.

WestEd's definition for California: (4)(5)

"The name College Promise does not denote one specific program model. Rather, it serves as an umbrella term that covers a wide range of student support programs led by colleges, universities, foundations, and local and state governments. There is no common definition for College Promise, as is evident in the wide variation in program features across the country. However, most researchers agree that, minimally, a College Promise program provides financial support for students who live or attend school in the particular area

served by that program. In choosing the California programs for this analysis, the CCPP included financial support and place-based eligibility as the first two of six selection criteria:

1. Providing direct financial support for college costs
2. Serving students based on where they live or attend school
3. Establishing an objective selection process for eligible students
4. Expecting that the program will be ongoing
5. Developing programs locally to meet college and community needs, not exclusively to distribute state-mandated financial assistance (such as the California College Promise Grant, CCPG)
6. Providing financial support to students as of fall 2019."

WestEd's list also provides all of the college promises in the state and the year they were formed, including dozens of college promise programs formed after 2008. The most recent year a college promise was formed according to their list is 2019, which may or may not be accurate and current.

College Promise's definition for the country: (6)

"A program that supports college attendance at an accredited college or university as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

- A program that has a public-facing website.
- A program that covers tuition for a career-technical education (CTE) certificate, a two-year degree, or four-year degree; or, provides dual credit classes or early college programming that leads to a certificate and/or degree in an accredited K-12 school, college or university."

A few additional insights regarding the definition:

- "College" often connotes only 2- or 4-year institutions so some researchers have been intentional about saying "postsecondary education" to broaden the range of programming/institutions that are included.
- In some promise programs, the financial assistance does not actually include much/any new dollars, but instead is a repackaging/marketing of existing state/federal aid financial scholarship alone or academic

supports or college application process supports or mentoring, etc.

- It's important to consider whether an institution offers a college promise and/or participates with another organization that offers it (e.g., is a recipient of students for another promise program).
- Related, some college promise programs are run by nonprofits, which is not referenced in WestEd's definition.
- For each college promise program, it would be useful to track the following data points in the future:
 - WHO is eligible to receive the resources (geography, eligibility criteria);
 - WHAT is the max value of new dollars (outside of Pell, and state aid);
 - WHERE can college promise be used; and
 - Categories of support offered (\$, tutoring, mentoring, college application support, career development, emergency aid, etc.).

Sources:

(4) Refer to

californiacollegepromise.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CCPP-Research-Brief-2-022720-final.pdf.

(5) Refer to californiacollegepromise.wested.org/what-is-ca-college-promise/.

(6) Refer to www.mypromisetool.org/?source=college-promise-web.

10. [For proposed data element(s) not collected] Please propose institution(s) that would be most suited for the new data collection effort.

N/A

11. Please explain the desired level(s) of grain size for each data element proposed. (i.e., individual-level, institution-level, or other aggregated levels)? Multiple grain sizes may be requested for each proposed data element.

Multiple, multi-sector stakeholders will benefit from college promise data at the 1) institution-level and 2) individual-level because there will be consensus statewide about what a college promise is and how to track it. Consensus currently does not exist in California or nationally.

Stakeholders will also benefit because the current data is limited to data from 2007-2008. After analyzing data from both WestEd and College Promise, I identified 116 college promise programs founded AFTER 2008. This includes programs that founded the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC), like Oakland Promise in Alameda County, Stockton Scholars in San Joaquin County, and Richmond Promise in Contra Costa County.

With more information about where college promises exist at the institution- and individual-levels, we can better understand the broader access to college access programming that students have, and the impact of college promise programs on students' access, persistence, and degree completion.

12. Please explain the intended use case(s) for the proposed data elements (i.e., dashboards, query builder, or the research request tool)? Multiple use cases may be requested for each proposed data element.

Currently, networks and organizations like NCCPC rely on WestEd and College Promise to track college promise programs at scale in the state as described in prior responses. Enhanced college promise data can inform existing tools.

Dashboards

The Goals would include:

- An improved filter by academic year that produces results beyond 2007-2008.

The Dashboard would include:

- Disaggregation by a) year, b) college, c) student characteristics (including race/ethnicity, gender, age bracket, parental education level, military status, foster status, and homelessness status), and d) enrollment in programs above and beyond what is currently collected.
- Export with the ability to provide summary files or charts based on the variables selected.

Query builder

Local, regional, and state leaders can run specific queries leveraging

information about college promise programs to better understand how student access, pathways, and outcomes are impacted by access, or lack of, to college promise programs. They can research answers to topics listed in question #2.

Research request tool

Researchers can conduct complex analysis and evaluate how access, or lack of access, to college promise programs may impact college enrollment, affordability, persistence, completion, and earnings outcomes for students.

The following are quotes of support from a number NCCPC college promise members and champions in California and nationally highlighting the importance of this proposal:

Per Veena Pawloski, Chief Program Officer of Oakland Promise, "Expanding the definition of "college promise" will allow for appropriate recognition and tracking of programs that provide wraparound college access services in addition to just scholarship support. At Oakland Promise, we know that our programs such as mentoring, advising, peer leadership, workforce development, and family and community engagement transform lives of Oakland youth. By broadening our coalition to include impactful organizations that offer various college success services, we ensure families and students have access to more vital resources, thus paving the way towards economic mobility. This inclusive approach creates brighter futures, stronger communities, and expanded opportunities for our students."

Per René Alvarez, Ph.D., Dean of Academic Success & Student Equity at San José City College which manages the San José and Milpitas Promises, "By tracking college promise programs' implementation and outcomes statewide, we can identify gaps, measure success, and make data-informed decisions to ensure affordable and equitable access to higher education opportunities for all students."

Per Jennifer Iriti, Ph.D., Research Scientist and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Education and Evaluation Strategy at the University of Pittsburgh, "Research and evaluation findings are only as good as the underlying data used to generate them. Without a clear definition of Promise programs and

aligned data infrastructure, we have significant blind spots in our ability to understand the college-going ecosystem and resulting impacts. This effort to better define and track college promise providers will aid in understanding the overall landscape of college support and position the state to better understand high leverage practices."