

BUILDING ASSETS & ASPIRATIONS



A Playbook for Integrating College Promise (CP) Programs & Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs)

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Table of Contents

1. Opening Letter.....	1
2. Introduction.....	2
a. Mott Foundation’s Commitment	
b. CP-CSA Integration Partners	
c. CP-CSA Peer Learning Network	
3. The Case for Integrating Promise and CSAs.....	6
4. Key Elements for CP-CSA Integration.....	8
a. College Promise	
b. CSAs	
c. Key Stakeholders	
d. Financial Sustainability	
5. Case Studies, Student & Family Stories.....	12
a. Community Foundation of Wabash County	
b. Lansing Promise/SAVES	
c. Providence Promise	
d. Illinois Heartland Alliance	
e. Oakland Promise/Brilliant Baby	
f. KC Scholars	
6. Plans Forward.....	16
7. Appendix.....	17

Opening Letter

In the 21st century, a high school diploma is not enough to lead Americans to a good job and a decent quality of life. However, even though a postsecondary degree or certification is becoming increasingly necessary, the cost of an education beyond high school has never been higher and the daunting expense of college attendance has convinced far too many that a college degree or postsecondary certificate is out of reach. College completion is another challenge: the 6-year graduation rate for undergraduates was 62 percent in 2018. Both College Promise programs and Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs) aim to reverse these damaging trends, removing economic barriers to higher education and working to build a college-going culture within students, families, and their communities.

Since 2017, College Promise, Prosperity Now, and the National League of Cities have partnered to leverage their experience, expertise, and resources to significantly change the trajectory for hundreds of thousands of children and families.

Our one common goal is to expand the impact of College Promise (CP) programs by incorporating Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs) into their designs to help students earn their certificates and degrees. When integrated, these initiatives embed sustainable incentives, scholarships, college-community partnerships, savings, analytics, cross-sector collaboration, and a clear pathway for student success to and through postsecondary education, career, and community.

This College Promise-Children's Savings Account (CP-CSA) Integration Playbook aims to share the relative benefits, challenges, and strategies to incorporate CSAs into College Promise programs. Whether you are interested in learning best practices, replicating successful integration models, or just beginning to explore what a College Promise or CSA could do for your community you will find this Playbook to be a useful resource.

The high-level takeaways from this Playbook are: (1) the demonstrated, long-term shared commitment to the college-to-career pipeline from Promise and CSA programs; (2) the varied local/state intersection opportunities and evidence in support of them; and (3) the critical roles of partners working together to coordinate resources and delivery in ensuring maximum impact.

We hope that you find this CP-CSA Integration Playbook to be a helpful resource.

Best regards,



Martha J. Kanter
CEO



Michelle Cooper
CP-CSA Project Director

Introduction

CSAs are incentivized savings or investment accounts established for children with the purpose of financing postsecondary education. By building real savings, these accounts help raise post-high school expectations and cultivate a [college-bound mentality](#) among students and their families. CSAs provide a tangible asset base and give students and parents experience using mainstream financial institutions. This is particularly important as many economically disadvantaged Americans don't have equitable access to financial institutions. [For example](#), in 2019, 5.4 percent of U.S. households (approximately 7.1 million households) were unbanked.

The sheer existence of a CSA supports a post-high school mindset for both children and their families. It is a psychologically powerful image that shapes expectations and achievements in positive ways. [Research](#) shows us that children with even a small amount of educational savings (less than \$500) are 3 times more likely to enroll in college and 2.5 times more likely to graduate, than a child with no savings.

Well-designed Promise programs directly remove the economic burden of tuition and fees. A strong monetary incentive coupled with the “free college” messaging and a widely accessible program allows students who might not otherwise have considered college a viable option to pursue higher education. However, the majority of Promise programs focus on covering the cost of tuition and fees, not addressing the total cost of college attendance students must bear that includes books, technology, housing, food, etc.

Standing alone, CSAs and College Promise programs offer families immense benefits, but neither is a silver bullet to the college affordability and completion challenges. When implemented in tandem, the two complement each other well, with the relative strengths of the two community and state-based initiatives helping to overcome the challenges of each alone. For example, savings accrued through CSAs tend to be modest and are unlikely to sufficiently finance the ever-rising price tag of full college costs. When combining CSAs with a “Promise,” economically disadvantaged students can combine CSA savings with Promise scholarships, in addition to federal and state financial aid, to cover all or a larger portion of college costs. This makes financing college more feasible. At the same time, while Promise programs help with tuition and fees, CSA savings allow students to pay for the non-tuition costs of attending college (e.g., housing, transportation, food, etc.). Further, [research](#) shows that CSAs help influence a college-bound identity early in life for students and parents. This is critical to make sure that low-income students succeed in K-12 education and become college-eligible so that they will be in a position to take full advantage of College Promise opportunities.

Despite the incredible synergy between these two policies, very few communities, even those utilizing both policies, are effectively combining their efforts to integrate CSAs into Promise programs. The general lack of awareness and knowledge about the opportunities for CP-CSA integration has led to slow uptake of integration strategies and little consensus on best practices. With the recent exponential growth in the number of [CSA](#) and [Promise programs](#), and the growing awareness of Promise and CSA leaders to emphasize program quality beyond program creation, the time has never been better to introduce CSAs as a synergistic boost to Promise outcomes and sustainability.

Special Note of Thanks

We would like to thank the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation whose generous support made this playbook possible.

We also extend special appreciation to our CP-CSA Partners, National League of Cities and Prosperity Now, especially Shira Markoff and Patrick Hain, for their continued leadership and support.



KC Scholars Students

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's Commitment



The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. It supports nonprofit programs throughout the United States and, on a limited geographic basis, internationally. Grantmaking is focused in four programs: Civil Society, Education, Environment and Flint Area. In addition to Flint, offices are located in metropolitan Detroit, Johannesburg and London. For more information, visit www.mott.org.

College Promise - Children's Savings Account (CP-CSA) Integration Partners



College Promise is a national, non-partisan initiative to build broad public support for funding the first two or more years of postsecondary education for hard-working students, starting in America's community colleges.



The National League of Cities is an organization comprised of city, town, and village leaders that are focused on improving the quality of life for their current and future constituents.

With over 90 years of dedication to the strength, health, and advancement of local governments, NLC has gained the trust and support of more than 2,000 cities across the nation. Together, our mission is to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy and drive innovative solutions.



Prosperity Now (formerly CFED) believes that everyone deserves a chance to prosper. Since 1979, we have helped make it possible for millions of people, especially people of color and those of limited incomes, to achieve financial security, stability, and, ultimately, prosperity. We offer a unique combination of scalable practical solutions, in-depth research, and proven policy solutions, all aimed at building wealth for those who need it most.

CP-CSA Partners Shared Services & Expertise:

- Grant access to partner convenings and meetings hosted by CP-CSA Network
- Communicate research findings through events, print, digital and social media
- Engage and support local and state cross-sector leaders to learn about how to incorporate CSAs into College Promise programs through public-private partnerships, philanthropic investments, and/or local/state government financing solutions
- Convene the CP-CSA Network with state and national leaders to build knowledge about the benefits, challenges, and strategies for Promise programs that incorporate CSAs into their models
- Provide learning opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned through the CP-CSA Peer Learning Network

CP-CSA Peer Learning Network:

As of Fall 2021, the CP-CSA Peer Learning Network including community leaders from the following cities, towns, and regions:

- Abilene, TX
- Anchorage, AK
- Boston, MA
- Brazoria County, TX
- Brazos Valley, TX
- Brownsville, TX
- Cass City, MI
- Central Texas, TX
- Coastal Bend, TX
- Dallas, TX
- Denton, TX
- Dixon, IL
- El Monte, CA
- Flint, MI
- Fort Worth, TX
- Galveston, TX
- Greater Austin, TX
- Greater Baytown & Chambers County, TX
- Hays & Caldwell Counties, TX
- Houston, TX
- Indiana (State)
- Josephine County, OR
- Kalamazoo, MI
- Kansas City, MO
- Kenosha, WI
- Lansing, MI
- Louisville, KY
- Lubbock, TX
- Mason County, MI
- Miami, FL
- Milwaukee, WI
- Muskegon County, MI
- Oakland, CA
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Providence, RI
- Rhode Island (state)
- San Antonio, TX
- San Francisco, CA
- San Jose, CA
- St. Louis, MO
- St. Paul, MN
- Wabash County, IN
- Waco-McLennan County, TX
- West Sacramento, CA

The CP-CSA Peer Learning Network is a group of over 40 communities (and growing) across the US interested in learning and sharing knowledge around best practices and lessons learned, specifically around Children's Savings Accounts and Promise programs. As part of this network, participants have exclusive access to shared learning experiences, including resources, virtual events, and targeted discussions with peers, community leaders, and other experts from the field.

If you are interested in joining the CP-CSA Peer Learning Network, please email Michelle Cooper at michelle@collegepromise.org.

The Evidence

The integration of College Promise programs and Children's Savings Accounts initiatives provides a unique opportunity to comprehensively improve historically underserved students' access to and preparation for higher education and, beyond that, their long-term economic and social mobility.

Some College Promise programs have already piloted an integration of Children's Savings Accounts initiatives with existing Promise work. For example, Oakland Promise has incorporated ["small-dollar" CSAs](#) into its design. Initial deposits into "small-dollar" accounts typically range from \$5 to \$1,000.

More broadly, there were [over 65 CSA programs](#) nationwide serving more than 457,000 children in over 34 states in 2018. Furthermore, the existence and breadth of CSA programs has dramatically expanded in the last couple of years. [By the end of 2020](#), there were 109 active CSA programs serving over 922,000 children.

CSA programs, while they are a financial instrument and a vehicle for growing wealth, have a range of other benefits. [Research](#) shows that they also confer social, psychological, and emotional benefits. In addition, ongoing and regular deposits have exponential returns and cultivate a college-going mentality in general, improving educational outcomes, facilitating college completion, and improving post-college financial health. Other [non-financial outcomes](#) include positive effects on mothers' mental health and child development.

Promise programs provide a range of benefits for beneficiaries as well. They have been shown to improve high school grades and GPA, increase attendance and also lead to greater college/university enrollment as well as a greater likelihood of achieving postsecondary credentials. [One study](#) of over 30 community college promise programs found they are correlated with large increases in enrollment of first-time, full-time students--especially for Black, Hispanic, and female students. While many CSA programs begin at birth or early education, giving students earlier access to a college-going mindset, many College Promise programs begin in middle school or high school. Coupling both CSAs and Promise programs is an investment in a comprehensive strategy to support low-income students through college, therefore increasing their greater economic mobility.

[Significant evidence](#) exists regarding the benefits of implementing these two types of initiatives in tandem. However, further research will strengthen the connection and synergies between the two. While small-dollar CSAs are a positive development for promoting college-going and career expectations for low-income students and families, they alone are not enough for families to achieve financial equity and upward mobility.

This challenge [could also be mitigated through](#): 1) making larger initial investments rather than small-dollar CSAs; 2) utilizing targeted ongoing deposits to increase the impact of small-dollar CSAs, and 3) further broadening and integrating Promise and CSA programs.

[Other programs](#) include Opportunity Investment Accounts (OIAs), reward cards, and purchasing cards. OIAs provide low-wealth children an initial deposit of \$10,500 when born (\$1,000 for wealthiest to \$10,500 for the poorest). Monthly contributions of \$5 could allow even the poorest children to accumulate approximately \$40,000 at age 18. With rewards cards, families receive a rebate of 1 to 5% that goes directly into a CSA when they make purchases using the card. Finally, purchasing card (P-card) programs allow for governments and employers to receive 1.5% of the 2.5% interchange fee back, which then goes directly into a fund to finance CSAs.

The Evidence

There is an abundance of evidence highlighted through the next sections, illustrating the benefits of Promise-CSA integration from existing initiatives and the potential for further growth and development across the nation. In order to implement a joint program of this kind, some key detailed features are required.



IL Heartland Alliance CSA Working Group

For Further Reading:

- [Leveraging Free College and Children's Savings Accounts For A 21st Century Wealth Building Agenda](#), Dr. William Elliott III, University of Michigan School of Social Work
- [Reimagining College Promise Programs: A Wealth Perspective](#), Dr. William Elliott, III and Sophia Nielson, MSW, University of Michigan School of Social Work
- [Designing Sustainable Funding for College Promise Initiatives](#), Catherine M. Millett, ETS
- [Research Summary: Universal Accounts at Birth: Results From SEED for Oklahoma Kids](#), Center for Social Development, University of Washington in St. Louis
- [Community Leans in to Help Student Parents Become Successful Student Parents: More Likely to Attend Community College and Have a Higher GPA Than Their Childless Peers](#), Portia Polk, Generation Hope



Key Elements for CP-CSA Integration

College Promise

College Promise programs promote student access and success in postsecondary education by reducing the cost of college. Increasing college access and enrollment is vital to increasing college graduation, access to well-paying jobs, and ultimately economic and social mobility more generally. Most Promise programs do this by covering unmet tuition and fees, making a college degree more affordable and accessible for hardworking students. A Promise can be scaled for a single institution, a local community, or even an entire state. Each program can tailor its particular features and funding strategies to the needs and available resources of its chosen area.



College Promise uses a series of guiding principles to determine if a program meets the criteria to be a Promise:

- Covers, at a minimum, the full cost of tuition and fees needed to obtain a college degree or certificate
- Does not require more than a 3.0 GPA or excessively burdensome eligibility requirements
- Has a plan for longevity and financial sustainability.

College Promise produced a how-to manual entitled “[The College Promise City and County Playbook.](#)” This Playbook is a resource for local elected officials and their teams to guide them through every step of building or expanding College Promise programs in their communities. The first section covers laying the groundwork for a Promise by building support within a community. The second section discusses program design and reviews various features that can help make a program successful. The third section addresses financial sustainability and includes fundraising best practices. The fourth and final section discusses the implementation and administration of a Promise program. Prominent examples of successful Promise programs from across the country will be featured throughout the Playbook to demonstrate the utility of key program design elements.

Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs)

CSAs, often used interchangeably with Child Development Accounts (CDAs), are long-term savings or investment accounts for children (ages 0-18) and their families, especially those from low-income families, to build savings for the future. [CSAs](#):

- Provide incentives to grow savings, such as initial deposits, savings matches, or prize-linked savings (i.e., participants are entered into a drawing or raffle based on making a deposit)
- Are most often used for postsecondary education (e.g., college, vocational/technical schools), though other possible uses may include homeownership and financing a small business.

[Here is a map](#) of all children's savings programs.

To ensure that CSAs support the most vulnerable children, best practices suggest that they should be:

- Universal to build broad community support,
- Automatically opened so every child has an account, and
- Progressive to provide greater incentives for low- and moderate-income savers.

CSAs have remarkable ripple effects. Research indicates that low- and moderate-income children with college savings of just \$500 are three times more likely to enroll in college and four times more likely to graduate.

Since a CSA should be properly thought of as a “program,” rather than a financial product, the allowable uses of funds in a CSA are a function of both program rules and the particular kind of account product that is used as the CSA. At present, [49% of CSA programs](#) use a 529 account as the account product for participants. In such cases, the allowable uses of funds in a CSA would be limited to the same allowable uses for 529 accounts, i.e., tuition, fees and books. For the [48% of CSA programs](#) that use a regular savings account as the underlying account product, the range of allowable uses can be much broader and are only restricted by program rules. In most cases, CSA programs that use such accounts typically allow a broad range of education uses, including not only tuition, books, and fees, but also housing, transportation, and other costs. In addition, while funds in CSAs are most often designated for use for postsecondary education (e.g., college, vocational/technical schools), other possible asset uses may include homeownership and financing a small business.

To help organizations, cities, counties, and states design successful CSA programs, Prosperity Now has designed an interactive guide entitled "[Investing in Dreams: A Blueprint for Designing Children's Savings Account Programs](#)." This resource reflects the latest thinking on the successful design and implementation of CSA programs from both Prosperity Now and the many practitioners, researchers, funders, and others who have helped shape the CSA field. While all CSA programs share common elements, each individual program is typically tailored to meet local priorities and to work with available resources. "Investing in Dreams" takes stakeholders through the step-by-step process of designing and launching a program. It contains a number of valuable resources, tools, and information, such as a budget calculator to help interested parties estimate the cost of a program and other programmatic examples from various CSA programs.

College Promise-Children's Savings Account (CP-CSA) Integration

While College Promise programs provide much-needed support for many students, College Promise models and program designs vary. By covering the cost of tuition and fees, Promises greatly reduce the financial burden of pursuing a postsecondary degree or certificate; however, they often stop short of covering the full cost of attendance. Children's Savings Accounts can help fill the gap and cover additional costs associated with attendance: books, transportation, and other living expenses. When paired together, College Promise Programs and CSAs provide comprehensive support for students--helping ensure persistence and ultimately completion. Together, they contribute to building a solid foundation in a college-going culture, leading to greater, more robust postsecondary and career aspirations for students.

In addition to the financial aspects of reducing college costs, both College Promise programs and Children's Savings Accounts promote a college-going culture within a community or state.

Stakeholders

As community leaders work to create new opportunities to promote and sustain a college-going culture, it is vitally important that their efforts be inclusive and have the support of stakeholders. By bringing together leaders from all sectors, initiative leaders can develop shared goals and objectives, a strategic communications plan to highlight those shared community goals, and the ability to leverage the networks of their diverse stakeholders. When looking to implement a Promise-CSA Program, local leaders must first take a comprehensive look at their community, paying close attention to both its unique needs and opportunities. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to establishing a Promise Program or CSA, community involvement is key at every step in the process. By engaging stakeholders, leaders can not only build a strong base of community support, they are also able to develop creative solutions that fully leverage cross-sector expertise and resources. Such solutions might rely on a creative mix of funding from local community organizations, small businesses, or religious institutions. Ultimately, a program that fosters cross-sector collaboration will have the best chance of long-term success and sustained support for students.

Financial Sustainability

According to the Asset Funders Network's [2019 Children's Savings Account Survey of Private and Public Funding](#), 67.5% of total funding in the CSA field comes from public funding and 32% from private sources. 83% of CSA programs receive at least some private funding and 55% get all their funding from private sources. AFN's survey provides more information on these public-private partnerships and the potential for future CSA funding sustainability.

Case Studies, Student, & Family Stories

In this section, we highlight the efforts and impacts of six communities across the country that have already integrated or are working toward incorporating CSAs into their designs and expected outcomes.

Each community is represented through a linked case study, followed by a brief summary and key takeaways.

These case studies spotlight high-value strategies that leverage a cross-sector network of experts, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to build greater college-going aspirations and outcomes for their students and families.

Case Study #1: [Wabash County, IN](#)

Key Takeaways

1. By targeting the underserved 4th - 8th grade demographic, the CFWC fills a college preparation gap during certain critical years when students' identity is developing, and at a time when students are growing in their awareness of the value of money and the consequences of positive academic behaviors.
2. Because many of the objectives of CSAs and early commitment College Promise initiatives align with the priorities of community foundations, CSAs and early commitment College Promise programs are said to be "in the wheelhouse" of community foundations.
3. The Early Award Scholarship Program (EASP) has a positive association with children's state assessment scores in math and reading proficiency, as compared to those who don't have a CSA and those who have a CSA but aren't a part of EASP.

Authors: Patty Grant, Executive Director, and Joanne Case, Early Award Scholarship Program Officer, Grades 4 -8, Community Foundation of Wabash County

Wabash County, Indiana, had a pressing need for investment into educational attainment. The Community Foundation of Wabash County (CWFC) deviated from traditional scholarships, as they have limited ability to influence students' identity and incentivize learning during critical early years. In rethinking traditional scholarships, the CWFC asked: What if we pushed down the age at which students engage with scholarships? Could scholarships be earned and awarded at an earlier age and then held until the student enrolls in college? Thus, the Early Award Scholarship Program (EASP) was born.

Designed in collaboration with local educators, the EASP incentivizes precisely the 4th-8th grade learning that is predictive of educational success: reading, math, and language arts assignments. In addition to in-school scholarships, families may earn a semester savings match through deposits to their 529 savings account. By awarding small scholarships and savings matches frequently, students' college-going identity is continually called to mind.

The current criteria for awarding scholarships are as follows: 1) learning behaviors; 2) career/college exploration; 3) activities that require parent involvement.

Case Study #2: [Lansing, MI](#)

Authors: Amber Paxton, Director, City of Lansing's Office of Financial Empowerment and Justin M. Sheehan, Executive Director, Lansing Promise.

In the fall of 2012, the Lansing Promise Foundation and the Lansing Promise Zone Authority together administered the first Lansing Promise Scholarships. Since then, the Promise has accepted more than 1,500 Scholars into the program, investing more than \$3.5 million in gap-filling tuition assistance and leveraging millions of dollars more in federal, state, and local aid. More importantly, the Promise has seen a growing momentum across the City toward new expectations for student postsecondary enrollment and success after high school. And in 2020, the Lansing Promise experienced yet another increase in demand, accepting more than 65% of Lansing's graduating class into its 2020 cohort.

Key Takeaways

It is important for different agencies and organizations - in this case, Lansing SAVE, Capital Area College Access Network, Lansing Promise, and Lansing Financial Empowerment Center - to work in partnership for the betterment of students' futures.

This results in:

- Leveraging the skills of each partner
- Beginning the conversation regarding higher education as early as possible
- Facilitating a "warm hand off" from one stage to the next
- Eliminating "noise" for parents
- Fostering trust in the system of supports

Case Study #3: Providence, RI

Key Takeaways

- The model of leveraging family contributions with seed and earned incentives has been very effective. As of December 31, 2019, students collectively had more than \$237,000 in their college savings accounts. Since January 2020, families have earned more than \$78,000 in Early Scholarships for their CSAs. Currently, PVD Promise families hold over half a million dollars in their CSAs!
- Having parents and students serve on the Providence Promise Board of Directors increases beneficiary engagement and facilitates unique contributions from the student perspective to program design and implementation.
- The Family Engagement Program and the Early Scholarship Program are avenues for Providence Promise to build on the concept of a two-generation or intergenerational approach to higher education and college savings.

Author: Madalyn Ciampi, Executive Director, Providence Promise

Providence Public School students, and others across the state, face myriad challenges inside and outside of the classroom, and many struggle to pursue and persist in postsecondary programs. The Providence Promise program utilizes 529 College Savings Accounts, an “Early Scholarship” Incentive Program, and a robust family engagement plan in order to support students and families comprehensively.

One component of this innovative structure is early enrollment. Most parents and guardians enroll their children by the time they enter the public school system, though children from birth to ninth grade are currently eligible to enroll. This early start can help boost savings account accumulation and take full advantage of the positive impacts future-oriented thinking and dedicated college savings can have on a child, including academic performance and social-emotional development.

Providence Promise is catalyzing Rhode Islanders toward higher education. Nearly 80 percent of Providence Promise students will be the first in their families to enter and graduate from college, and more than 30% will be the first to graduate from high school.

Case Study #4: Illinois - Statewide Program

Authors: Jody Blaylock Chong, Associate Director of Impact Division and Amy Eisenstein, Coalition Manager, Heartland Alliance

In 2019 the Illinois Asset Building Group (IABG*), a project of the Heartland Alliance, helped to pass legislation (HB2237) establishing a statewide CSA program that would provide a \$50 seed deposit in a 529 college savings account for every child born or adopted in Illinois. Implementation of the Illinois CSA program will be delayed until January 2023 because COVID-19-related funding constraints have prevented the program from proceeding with its intended launch in January 2021. The coalition’s Children’s Savings Account Committee provided recommendations to the Illinois Treasurer’s Office for implementing an equitable statewide program.

*IABG has since rebranded to Financial Inclusion for All Illinois. [You can learn more here.](#)

Implementation recommendations for Illinois Heartland Alliance are:

- Center equity in the implementation
- Make building assets in CSA accounts easy
- Outreach through program and system innovation
- Support the development of community-driven, local CSA programs

Case Study #5: [Oakland, CA](#)

Key Takeaways

As of September 2021, Brilliant Baby opened 1,000 \$500 CSAs for very low-income households. These CSAs have over \$650,000 invested for children's college futures. 78% of families also participate in Financial Coaching.

Through K2C, each of the 5,000 Oakland public school kindergarten students are given \$100 from the Oakland Promise Scholarship fund annually.

Over 600 families received help in opening their family-owned CSAs. Students and families at over 70 elementary and middle schools participate in postsecondary and career-oriented programming, and school teams support parents in activating their web-based scholarship portal accounts.

The College Access and Completion program reaches 9,000 high school students each year through targeted college and career readiness supports. Over 2,000 students have applied for and been awarded between \$2,000 to \$16,000 in scholarships to 2-year, CTE, and 4-year programs, and are offered college and career advising, mentoring, and peer support. 88% of OP scholars persisted from the first year to the second year of college.

Authors: Amanda Feinstein, Director, Brilliant Baby and Wallace Louie, Director of Communications, Oakland Promise

The Oakland Promise's (OP) innovative cradle-to-career design is the most comprehensive CSA program intervention to date.

OP has four programs: Brilliant Baby, Kindergarten to College (K2C), College Access, and College Completion. OP focuses on four throughlines: college affordability, college-bound identity and persistence, families' engagement in children's education, and financial capability. Oakland Promise's Brilliant Baby program is the "front door" of entry into the cradle-to-career program. Using a two-generation approach, Brilliant Baby's core strategies include assisting parents in opening 529 college savings accounts seeded with a \$500 Promise investment, providing financial coaching and connection to resources for parents and guardians, and cultivating a community of support through events and workshops. K2C provides \$100 college scholarship accounts beginning in Kindergarten to all Oakland public school students. OP leverages components that engage parents at birth, provides financial assistance, skills, and knowledge, transforms elementary school cultures, equips secondary students with a foundation of college-readiness, and accompanies students to post-secondary education with financial and social supports.

Case Study #6: [Kansas City, MO](#)

Author, Beth Tankersley-Bankhead, PhD, President and CEO, KC Scholars

[KC Scholars](#) was launched in September 2016, and made its first awards in May 2017. The primary goals of KC Scholars are to:

- Increase postsecondary attainment in Greater Kansas City, with 75% of Scholars completing a postsecondary program – seven times the national average for 1st-generation, low-income students.
- Increase economic independence of Scholars and their families through inclusive prosperity and equitable connections to regional workforce opportunities.
- Have 80% of Scholar graduates remain in the Kansas City region to live and work – creating a racially, ethically, and generationally diverse workforce pipeline.

KC Scholars creates multiple paths to possibility possible by providing three distinct scholarships, awarded annually: Traditional-Aged Student Scholarships, Adult Learner Scholarships, College Savings Match.

Key Takeaways

- Having programs and scholarships that target different age groups and types of learners, with different program organizations and goals, can exponentially maximize impact and the number of college-going, successful students.
- This setup allows programs to be built that are tailored to different students' needs.
- Support programs once students matriculate to an institution of higher learning are vital to their continued success.

Plans Forward

As we recognize the tremendous local efforts in communities like Lansing, Wabash County, Kansas City, Oakland, and Providence, it is imperative that we consider the growth and sustainability of the other 450+ standalone Promise and CSAs programs and their opportunities for integration. While there is an opportunity to integrate existing programs, more Promise programs and more CSA programs emerge every year, and there is a unique opportunity to maximize impact by integrating them at the forefront.

Additionally, states like Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Indiana are continuing to work with their governments to provide more comprehensive supports and funding to the youth and families in their respective states. College Promise is continuing to explore opportunities to align state 529 and other various statewide CSA solutions with statewide Promise programs.

At the federal level, a variety of legislative proposals are underway, seeking to gain support. They propose federally-funded savings accounts to leverage local and state efforts, where every child would receive a seed deposit, along with annual funding and interest toward their future education and other assets.

Community savings initiatives, like CSAs, coupled with Promise programs are so much more than access to postsecondary education. These programs, when working in tandem, help students, their families, and communities build financial, academic, and career aspirations and goals. And while many of these accounts start small, their sheer existence can ignite important family conversations about finances, post-high school planning, and career goals. By shaping and designing for increased college and career-going expectations and achievements, integrating College Promise and CSA programs have great potential to serve as a significant gateway to lifelong learning and economic mobility.

For further information, please contact Michelle Cooper, CP-CSA Project Director at michelle@collegepromise.org or call 202-569-3000.

Appendix (Links)

Prosperity Now

- [CSA Starter Kit](#)
- [CSA Quick Guide](#)
- [Designing CSA Programs with an Equity Lens](#)
- [The Power of Connecting CSA and College Access Success Programs](#)
- [Investing in Dreams](#)

Washington University in St. Louis

- [Statewide Child Development Accounts and Local Partnerships: A Scalable Model that Can Include All Families](#)
- [Child Development Accounts at Scale: Sample State Legislation](#)

Other Resources

- [Insights, Aspirations and Action Investing in Asset Building for San Antonio Families](#)
- [Investing in the Future of our Community: A Case Study on Funders' Motivations for Supporting Children's Savings Accounts](#)
- [How America Banks: Household Use of Banking and Financial Services \(FDIC\)](#)
- [California Promise Playbook](#)
- [California Promise Guide and Cost Estimator Tool](#)
- [Better Together: Policies That Link Children's Savings Accounts With Access Initiatives to Pave the Way to College](#)



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