



Seattle Promise College Tuition Program

INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR NEW PATHWAYS TO JOBS IN SEATTLE

A post-secondary degree, credential or certificate has become necessary to obtaining a living wage job. By 2020, 70% of all jobs in Washington State will require some post-secondary education.¹ But recent data suggests that only 31% of Washington’s high school students go on to attain a post-secondary credential by the age of 26,² and Washington State ranks 47th in the nation for college participation.³

A report published by Seattle Public Schools found that for the class of 2015 that 41% of students did not attend college or dropped out after their first year. In addition, the report found that “historically underserved students of color (Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander) attend college at a rate of 17 percentage points lower than White, Asian, and Multiracial students.”

Multiple studies have found that first year after high school — the ‘13th year’ — is a true tipping point for a student to continue their education and get a strong family-wage job down the road.

MAYOR DURKAN’S SEATTLE PROMISE COLLEGE TUITION PROGRAM

In response to growing workforce gaps and the need to expand access to post-secondary opportunities and adequately prepare Seattle students to participate in Seattle’s growing economy, in one of her first acts as Mayor, in November 2017 Mayor Jenny Durkan created the Seattle Promise College Tuition Program.

The program will provide up to 90 credits of tuition for students who graduate from Seattle Public Schools. When fully implemented, the Seattle Promise College Tuition Program will ensure that all eligible graduates of Seattle Public Schools are able to attend up to two years of courses at any Seattle Colleges towards a degree, credential, certificate or pre-apprenticeship program. The program will build on the success of the South Seattle College 13th Year Scholarship program.

A critical component of the program will be outreach and support services for students at both high schools and colleges, including a potential college readiness academy or student success program at each high school and college.

¹ [Georgetown Public Policy Institute](#)

² [Washington Roundtable](#)

³ [Washington State Council of Presidents](#)

TIMELINE: FULL IMPLEMENTATION

To prepare for full implementation of the program, the 2018-19 school year will serve as a transition year. During this transition year, a total of six Seattle area high schools will be served through the Seattle Promise College Tuition Program in partnership with all three Seattle colleges. The program is expected to serve about 1,000 high school and college students, including approximately 500 students in six high schools who will have access to support and outreach staff for college readiness and wrap around college preparation services; approximately 215 students will receive 13th Year scholarships at Seattle Colleges; and approximately 120 students will be eligible to receive 14th Year scholarships at South Seattle College. In 2019, all Seattle Public High School students will be eligible for Seattle Promise, and by 2020, it is expected that the Seattle Promise will serve all students, at all public Seattle high schools and allow students the choice to attend any of the three Seattle College campuses.



COST ESTIMATES

Based on enrollment projections from South Seattle College, the transition year will cost approximately \$1.76 million for the 2018-2019 school year, which includes \$1.1 million from the City of Seattle. The cost estimates for the fully implemented program, including staff for college preparation and wrap around support at both the high school and college level, “last dollar” scholarships, and additional budget for equity funds for students who require additional assistance, total approximately \$6.3 million in the 2020-21 school year. The costs are projected to increase by inflation each year after that. Funding sources for the program will likely include a combination of City investment, private partnerships, and Seattle Colleges.