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Contacts: Audrey Dow, 310.402.8858, [audrey@collegecampaign.org](mailto:audrey@collegecampaign.org)  
Mary Rauner, 650.771.0083, [mrauner@wested.org](mailto:mrauner@wested.org)  
Claudine Battisti, 213.580.7516, [cbattisti@lachamber.com](mailto:cbattisti@lachamber.com)  
Roshin Mathew, 213.377.5630, [rmathew@calfund.org](mailto:rmathew@calfund.org)

## College Promise Programs in Los Angeles County Receive Support to Strengthen Student Success

*Research, technical assistance, philanthropy, advocacy, and business organizations collaborate to launch the Promises That Count initiative aimed at strengthening local College Promise programs and increasing the number of students who earn a college degree or who transfer.*

(Los Angeles, April 3, 2018) — The California College Promise Project (CCPP) at WestEd is partnering with Campaign for College Opportunity and UNITE-LA to launch the Los Angeles County *Promises That Count* initiative. Funded by the California Community Foundation, the [three-year initiative](#) focuses on supporting the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of College Promise efforts, with the goal of ensuring stronger institutional support so more students graduate in Los Angeles County.

College Promise programs incentivize college enrollment, persistence, and completion by providing financial, academic, and other support services to students based on where they live or where they attend school. **While the financial support from Promise programs is critically important for many students, it is not enough to ensure that they will be able to attain their higher education goals once they enroll in college.**

Too many California college students do not complete a degree or, in the case of community college students, do not earn a credential or transfer to a four-year institution. Their higher education efforts can be derailed because of an outdated remedial education system, insufficient academic support, or a confusing transfer maze.

Key to making the promise count in a College Promise program is a program's ability to mitigate or eliminate such barriers through academic support; clear, simple, and consistent messaging to students and their families; improved assessment and placement measures; education and career guidance; cohort models, guided pathways, and other support services.

All of the College Promise programs in Los Angeles County will be invited to join the *Promises That Count* Alliance, designed to share best practices and strategies across programs. The county-wide alliance will convene several times a year to discuss common challenges and innovative solutions to improving and sustaining College Promise throughout the greater Los Angeles area.



A centerpiece of the initiative is the ***Promises That Count Community of Practice (CoP)***, a 15-month effort focused on strategies intended to help College Promise programs advance in this essential work. Cross-sector teams from seven College Promise programs in Los Angeles County have been selected to participate in the CoP: Cerritos College (Cerritos Complete), College of the Canyons (First Year Promise), Long Beach City College (Promise Pathways), Los Angeles Community College District (Los Angeles Promise), Pasadena City College (Pathways Program), Rio Hondo College (Rio Hondo College Promise), and El Camino Community College District (South Bay Promise).

Each participating school and/or district will receive a grant of between \$30,000 and \$50,000 and will receive support from WestEd and other statewide and national College Promise leaders through a series of in-person meetings and phone calls.

Between the formal Community of Practice meetings, each program team will set short-term goals, identify evaluation metrics, implement changes, and track and evaluate efforts. CoP members will also present their successes and challenges during alliance meetings to help all College Promise programs in Los Angeles County strengthen the way they support their students.

“Pasadena City College is proud to be a part of the *Promises That Count* Community of Practice. It will create opportunities for dialogue and learning to ensure that we are considering the needs of our students beyond college affordability and include the much-needed wrap-around support to get them to and through college,” says Dr. Cynthia D. Olivo, Vice President of Student Services at Pasadena City College. “This unique opportunity for us to gather as practitioners can lead to expanding our capacity for change because sometimes we must adopt new ways of supporting our students.”

“Congratulations to Los Angeles County Community College Promise initiatives, philanthropists, advocates, business leaders, and research organizations for knowing that it takes all of us together to improve student success,” says **Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor of the California Community Colleges**. “The *Promises That Count* initiative is the type of partnership that will ensure our state’s Promise programs don’t fall short on their promise to graduate more students. Focusing on affordability, clearing pathways, increasing student supports, and professional development is the right formula for any successful promise effort.”

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### **See what others are saying about the *Promises That Count* Community of Practice**

“The power of our initiative is the incredible network of regional community colleges. They are working together to make sure our young people don’t just enroll in college, but enroll and



thrive. What the network learns and applies to ensure our students succeed through their College Promise programs will strengthen College Promise programs across California.” **John Garcia III, Senior Program Officer, California Community Foundation.**

“A college promise begins with making sure all capable students are able to afford going to college. A promise that counts is focused on supporting a student once he or she arrives on that campus so that students can reach their dreams successfully earning a degree, certificate, or transferring. I congratulate these colleges for their commitment to making these dreams a reality.” **Michele Siqueiros, President, Campaign for College Opportunity.**

“What’s so exciting about the *Promises That Count* initiative, is that each program’s cross-sector team is committed to ensuring that their students will get the support they need to prepare for and succeed in college. Institutions and their partners are working collectively to meet the regional needs of their students. This work will ensure that students who need the most support — low-income, first generation, and those underrepresented in higher education — will receive the full benefits of the College Promise and will achieve their higher education goals.” **Mary Rauner, Senior Research Associate, WestEd.**

“UNITE-LA continues its work committed to a college-ready L.A. Los Angeles County college promise programs receiving further support to ensure our area students complete their college education is directly in line with our goals. We are excited to be a partner in this endeavor as we all work towards the same goal of college completion for every student.” **David Rattray, President, UNITE-LA.**

“The Los Angeles Community College District is thrilled to join the Promises that Count initiative. Partnering with diverse and influential stakeholders has been the hallmark of the Los Angeles College Promise. The development of a collaborative, regional model will further our efforts to build stronger academic and support programs for the students of Los Angeles.” **Dr. Francisco C. Rodriguez, Chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District.**

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