

An Overview of City- and State-Sponsored Promise Programs

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September 24, 2025 | 2025-R-0161

Issue

This report provides an overview of (1) city-based promise programs in Connecticut and (2) states that have state-based promise programs; specifically on their authorizing statute and administering agency.

Summary

Connecticut has three active city-based promise programs. These initiatives are funded by various donors, including universities, non-profits, foundations, and other entities, to provide financial support for students to access higher education opportunities. This report provides an overview of these three programs, including information on their funding amounts, eligibility requirements, donation sources, and additional aid and scholarship matches for Promise scholars.

Currently, Connecticut does not have a state-based promise program; however, other states across the country do. This report also provides a brief overview of these state-based programs, including the statutes that authorize them and the agencies responsible for their administration. (Although this report highlights state-based programs that are specifically titled “promise” programs, a broader list of similar initiatives operating under different names can be found [here](#).)

Connecticut Promise Programs

Connecticut’s three city-based promise programs are located in Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury.

Hartford Promise Program

[The Hartford Promise Program](#) is a last-dollar scholarship that covers the remaining funding gap after all individual grants, financial aid, and other scholarships have been applied (up to a certain amount) for students attending an accredited, non-profit college or university full-time (certificate programs are not eligible). Under the program, students attending an eligible four-year college or university receive up to \$5,000 per year from Hartford Promise. As of this year, they also receive up to \$20,000 per year in additional funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for a total of up to \$25,000 per year. Students attending an eligible two-year college receive up to \$2,500 per year from Hartford Promise.

The Hartford Promise Program is funded through donations from various partners, including corporations, foundations, and individuals. The full list of partners can be found [here](#).

To qualify for funding through the program, a student must:

1. attend a Hartford public high school continuously since ninth grade,
2. be a Hartford resident throughout high school,
3. have a 93% or better cumulative attendance record during high school, and
4. have a 3.0 cumulative GPA or better on a 4.0 scale in high school.

In addition to the funding amounts discussed above, certain colleges and universities provide a scholarship match to Hartford Promise Scholars who are admitted to their school as shown below.

- University of Connecticut: Full match up to \$5,000
- University of Chicago: Full match up to \$5,000
- Eastern Connecticut State University: Full match up to \$5,000
- Quinnipiac University: Full match up to \$5,000
- University of St. Joseph Connecticut: Full match up to \$5,000
- College of the Holy Cross: Full match up to \$5,000
- Central Connecticut State University: Full match up to \$5,000

Additionally, the Connecticut colleges and universities shown below provide additional aid to Hartford Promise Scholars who are admitted to their school.

- University of Hartford: Free housing for all four years
- Goodwin College: Financial support for certain two- and four-year degree programs

New Haven Promise Program

The [New Haven Promise Program](#) provides financial assistance for students attending certain Connecticut colleges and universities. [Yale University](#) co-founded the program and is its principal funder. The amount of New Haven Promise funding a student receives is based on the college or university attended, length of residency, and the amount of federal Pell Grant funding a scholar receives.

Table 1 below shows the maximum funding amount a student can earn through New Haven Promise based on the Connecticut college or university they attend.

Table 1: New Haven Promise Maximum Funding Amounts

College/University	New Haven Promise Funding Amount
University of Connecticut	Up to \$15,000/year for up to four years (eight semesters)
Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western Connecticut State University	Up to \$8,500/year for up to four years (eight semesters)
Any two-year Connecticut community college	Up to \$3,000/year for up to two years (four semesters)
Any private Connecticut university	Up to \$5,000/year for up to four years (eight semesters)

The funding amount a student receives is also scaled by the length of the student's continuous enrollment in a New Haven public school or approved charter school, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: New Haven Promise Funding Scale

Length of Residency (by grades attended in a New Haven public school or approved charter)	Qualifying Percentage
Pre-K - 12	100%
K - 12	100%
1 - 12	95%
2 - 12	95%
3 - 12	95%
4 - 12	90%
5 - 12	85%
6 - 12	80%
7 - 12	75%
8 - 12	70%

Table 2 (continued)

Length of Residency (by grades attended in a New Haven public school or approved charter)	Qualifying Percentage
9 - 12	65%
10 -12	0%
11 - 12	0%
12 - 12	0%

To qualify for funding through the New Haven Promise Program, a student must:

1. attend a New Haven public high school or approved charter school continuously for at least grades 9 through 12;
2. be a New Haven resident;
3. have a 90% or better cumulative attendance record during high school;
4. have a 3.0 cumulative GPA or better on a 4.0 scale in high school (or a 2.5-2.99 GPA for Passport to Promise applicants, see below);
5. have a positive high school disciplinary record; and
6. complete 40 approved community service hours over four years of high school (for more information on this requirement see [here](#)).

Students that have a 2.5-2.99 GPA, but meet all other eligibility requirements listed above, receive a \$1,000 scholarship for their freshmen year of college through “Passport to Promise.” Then, if they achieve at least a 2.0 GPA and earn at least 24 credit hours in their freshman year, they automatically receive a regular New Haven Promise award for the remainder of their studies for up to three years.

Waterbury Promise Program

The [Waterbury Promise Program](#) is a last-dollar scholarship (up to \$5,000 per year) that covers the remaining funding gap after all individual grants, financial aid, and other scholarships have been applied for students attending an accredited two- or four-year Connecticut college or university full-time.

The program is funded through donations from various partners, including corporations, foundations, and individuals. Additionally for FY 26 and FY 27, Waterbury Promise is receiving \$1.5 million per year in funding from the State Department of Education ([PA 25-168](#), § 36(MM)). The full list of partners can be found [here](#).

To qualify for funding through the Waterbury Promise Program, a student must:

1. be a Waterbury resident for all four years of high school;
2. attend a Waterbury public high school, Kaynor Technical School, or Holy Cross High School continuously since ninth grade;
3. have a 3.0 cumulative GPA or better on a 4.0 scale in high school; and
4. have a 90% or better cumulative attendance record.

In addition to the funding amounts discussed above, certain Connecticut colleges and universities provide a scholarship match to Waterbury Promise Scholars who are admitted to their school as shown below.

- University of Connecticut: Full match of \$5,000
- Eastern Connecticut State University: Match of up to \$5,000
- Post University: Match of up to \$5,000
- University of New Haven: Minimum \$25,000 tuition scholarship

States With State-Sponsored Promise Programs

Table 3 below identifies states that have a state-based promise program along with the program name, corresponding state statute (if applicable), and administering agency.

Table 3: State-Sponsored Promise Programs and Corresponding Statutes

State	Program Name	Statute	Administering Agency
Arizona	Arizona Promise Program	Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-1701	Board of Regents
California	California College Promise Grant	For community colleges: Cal. Educ. Code § 76396 For four-year colleges: Cal. Educ. Code § 67430 et seq.	Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (for the community college grant) Trustees of the California State University (for the four-year college grant)
Colorado	Colorado Promise	Colo. Rev. Stat § 39-22-570	(N/A - tax incentive program)
Hawaii	Hawaii Promise Scholarship	Haw. Rev. Stat § 304A-506	Board of Regents

Table 3 (continued)

State	Program Name	Statute	Administering Agency
Kansas	Kansas Promise Scholarship	Kan. Stat. Ann. § 74-32,272	Board of Regents
Louisiana	M.J. Foster Promise Program	LA. Rev. Stat. § 17:3047	Board of Regents through the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance
Maryland	Community College Promise Scholarship	Md. Code, Educ. § 18-3601 et seq.	Higher Education Commission
Minnesota	North Star Promise	Minn. Stat. § 136A.1465	Office of Higher Education
Montana	Montana Promise Grant Program	Mont. Code § 20-26-623	Board of Regents through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
Nevada	Nevada Promise Scholarship	Nev. Rev. Stat. § 396.961 et seq.	Board of Regents
New Jersey	NJ College Promise (consists of “Community College Opportunity Grant” for two-year schools and “Garden State Guarantee” for four-year schools)	N.J. Rev. Stat. § 18A:71B-112 (for “Community College Opportunity Grant”; “Garden State Guarantee” not explicitly in statute)	Higher Education Student Assistance Authority
Oklahoma	Oklahoma’s Promise	Okla. Stat. Ann. 70 § 2602	State Regents for Higher Education
Oregon	Oregon Promise Grant	Or. Rev. Stat. § 341.522	Office of Student Access and Completion
Rhode Island	Rhode Island Promise	R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-107-1 et seq.	The Community College of Rhode Island’s financial aid office in conjunction with their office of enrollment management (or their respective equivalent offices)
Tennessee	Tennessee Promise	Tenn. Code. Ann. § 49-4-708	Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation
Utah	Utah Promise Grant	Utah Code § 53B-13a-104	Board of Higher Education

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