



2012

# Promoting Academic Capital Formation Among Urban Youth: City-Wide Approaches


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## Recommended Citation

Perna, L. W., & Hadinger, M. (2012). Promoting Academic Capital Formation Among Urban Youth: City-Wide Approaches. *Readings in Education: Expanding Postsecondary Opportunity for Underrepresented Students: Theory and Practice of Academic Capital Formation*, 26 29-64. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/424](http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/424)

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# Promoting Academic Capital Formation Among Urban Youth: City-Wide Approaches

## **Abstract**

The many benefits of increased levels of educational attainment to both individuals and society are well-established (Bailey & Mindle, 2003; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010; Cook & King, 2004). With increased levels of educational attainment come higher average earnings, lower rates of poverty, lower likelihood of unemployment, better working conditions, improved health, and a host of other individual benefits (Baum et al., 2010). Society benefits from higher educational attainment through increases in taxes paid, lower rates of dependence on social welfare programs, and greater civic engagement (Baum et al., 2010). By providing a more qualified workforce, increased educational attainment can also be a tool for promoting economic growth and revitalization, particularly in our nation's urban areas (Miller-Adams, 2006).

## **Disciplines**

Accessibility | Education | Education Economics | Higher Education

## Chapter 2

# Promoting Academic Capital Formation among Urban Youth: Citywide Approaches

LAURA W. PERNA AND MARGARET A. HADINGER

“There’s the money, and then there’s everything else.”  
—Janice Brown, Kalamazoo Promise

“There’s cash ready, and there’s college ready.”  
—Brian Barber, Muskegon Promise Zone

**T**he many benefits of increased levels of educational attainment to both individuals and society are well established (Bailey & Mindle, 2003; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010; Cook & King, 2004). With increased levels of educational attainment come higher average earnings, lower rates of poverty, lower likelihood of unemployment, better working conditions, improved health, and a host of other individual benefits (Baum et al., 2010). Society benefits from higher educational attainment through

increases in taxes paid, lower rates of dependence on social welfare programs, and greater civic engagement (Baum et al., 2010). By providing a more qualified workforce, increased educational attainment can also be a tool for promoting economic growth and revitalization, particularly in our nation's urban areas (Miller-Adams, 2006).

Despite the many benefits, college access and success continue to vary across groups. Descriptive data consistently demonstrate lower rates of college access and completion for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites, for students from lower than from higher-income families, and for first-generation college students than for students whose parents have entered or completed college (Baum et al., 2010).

Rates of college access and success also vary based on place of residence. *Measuring Up 2008*, the biennial state-by-state report card produced by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, documents variations in college participation and completion by state. In 2008, for example, states like Arizona and Iowa earned substantially higher grades for college participation than did states like Alaska and Louisiana (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008). In terms of college completion, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Washington were among the top-performing states, whereas Alaska and Nevada were among the lowest-performing states (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008).

Within states, measures of college access and success also vary by place, with lower performance occurring more often in urban centers than in other areas. In 2009, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, using the Cumulative Promotion Index for calculating graduation rates, reported the average high school graduation rate in 2004–05 was just 53% for students attending public schools in the 50 largest cities (Swanson, 2009). In all but three of the 50 largest cities, the high school graduation rate was lower than the national average of 71% (Swanson, 2009). On average, high school graduation rates were 18 percentage points lower in the urban than the suburban segments of the metropolitan areas of the 50 largest cities (Swanson, 2009). Gaps in high school graduation rates between urban and suburban areas of a metropolitan area exceeded 35 percentage points in Baltimore, Cleveland, Columbus, and Milwaukee (Swanson, 2009). Table 2.1 shows that high school graduation rates were below the national average in all but one of the 25 largest cities.

Much has been written about the role of elementary and secondary schools in improving college access and success for groups of students that

are historically underrepresented in higher education. For example, in a recent guide commissioned by the Institute for Education Sciences, Tierney and colleagues (2009) offer a set of recommendations that high schools may implement to improve students' academic preparation for college, aspirations and expectations for college, and steps to college entry.

Attention to schools is essential. Research consistently shows academic preparation and achievement at the K–12 level are critical to college access and success, and academic preparation and achievement continue to be lower for Blacks and Hispanics and for students from lower income families (Adelman, 1999; Martinez & Klopott, 2002; Perna, 2005). Research also demonstrates structural differences across high schools that contribute to these gaps in academic preparation and achievement, as urban high schools typically offer fewer rigorous academic programs and courses than do other high schools (Adelman, 2006; Klugman & Butler, 2009; Walls, Setzer, & Lewis, 2005) and are often challenged to attract high-quality teachers (Klugman & Butler, 2009) and sufficient counselors (Perna et al., 2008).

Nonetheless, the magnitude and complexity of barriers that limit college access and success for urban youth suggest the merits of an approach that recognizes the role of not only schools, but also of the community more broadly. In their 2010 volume, St. John, Hu, and Fisher recommend that public universities and states use their theory of Academic Capital Formation to develop and implement comprehensive interventions that address both the financial and nonfinancial barriers to college access and success.

This chapter expands on St. John and colleagues (2010) recommendation by considering the role of cities in developing and supporting a comprehensive approach to promoting Academic Capital Formation among urban youth. The chapter begins by drawing on the central principles of Academic Capital Formation to identify the challenges that often limit educational attainment for urban youth. The theory of Academic Capital Formation is used to consider one increasingly common citywide approach to promoting educational attainment, "place-based" scholarships modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise. Place-based scholarships are awarded to students based in part on where the student lives and/or attends school. Philadelphia's attempts to coordinate available resources to promote Academic Capital Formation among city residents are explored. The chapter concludes by offering recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Table 2.1. Educational, Economic, and Demographic Characteristics of 25 Largest Cities

City	Public High School District Graduation Rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	Urban-Suburban Graduation Gap (pct point) <sup>3</sup>	% Population age 25 and older with less than HS degree <sup>1</sup>	% Population age 25 and older with a BA or higher <sup>1</sup>	% of children in poverty <sup>1</sup>	% of Population age 16 and older in Labor Force <sup>1</sup>	% Black <sup>1</sup>	% Hispanic <sup>1</sup>
Indianapolis	30.5	27.4	16.3	27.7	25.3	69.4	25.8	7.1
Detroit	37.5	21.6	23.9	12.1	46.5	55.1	76.8	7.1
Baltimore	41.5	39.2	23.1	24.9	28.4	62.2	63.1	2.7
Los Angeles	44.4	19.7	26.8	29.4	27.9	66.3	9.5	48.5
Columbus	44.7	38.1	13.0	32.5	27.7	70.2	25.5	4.6
Nashville	45.2	33.3	15.2	32.9	25.6	68.6	27.8	8.1
San Antonio	47.3	10.2	21.0	23.4	26.6	64.5	6.2	61.2
New York	50.5	28.6	21.0	33.1	27.3	62.8	23.3	27.4
Dallas	50.8	16.8	28.1	28.2	33.6	68.5	22.8	42.3
Jacksonville	50.8	20.1	13.0	24.3	19.0	68.6	29.9	6.2
Chicago	51.0	28.2	21.2	31.7	30.6	65.8	33.8	27.4
Memphis	51.2	17.5	18.6	22.8	36.9	65.5	60.6	5.2
Houston	52.9	17.3	26.0	28.3	31.5	68.2	23.1	41.4
Fort Worth	56.5	16.8	22.3	25.2	24.1	68.6	17.7	33.1
San Francisco	57.1	11.1	14.4	51.1	12.2	68.4	6.4	14.2
Phoenix	58.0	8.7	21.7	24.0	26.3	68.6	5.3	41.9

City	Public High School District Graduation Rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	Urban-Suburban Graduation Gap (pct point) <sup>3</sup>	% Population age 25 and older with less than HS degree <sup>1</sup>	% Population age 25 and older with a BA or higher <sup>1</sup>	% of children in poverty <sup>1</sup>	% of Population age 16 and older in Labor Force <sup>1</sup>	% Black <sup>1</sup>	% Hispanic <sup>1</sup>
Boston	58.6	22.0	15.8	42.9	27.8	68.6	21.9	15.7
Denver	58.6	19.9	16.7	39.3	26.4	70.6	9.7	33.8
Austin	58.9	12.5	15.7	43.5	25.1	73.9	8.4	34.6
Charlotte	60.5	11.1	11.9	39.8	17.4	73.7	32.7	11.0
El Paso	60.6	-10.0	27.6	20.9	35.6	60.4	2.6	80.0
Philadelphia	62.1	21.6	20.8	22.1	34.2	59.0	41.9	11.0
San Diego	63.7	4.1	13.7	40.6	17.3	66.8	6.6	27.3
Seattle	68.9	4.2	7.9	54.3	12.4	72.3	7.5	5.9
San Jose	73.3	3.0	18	35.7	13.1	67.8	2.8	31.5
National Average	70.6	14.4	15.5	27.5	18.6	65.0	12.1	15.1

<sup>1</sup> Data from US Census American Community Survey, 2005–2009 averages

<sup>2</sup> Graduation rates are for the class of 2005 in the principal school districts serving the largest cities as calculated using the Cumulative Promotion Index, see Swanson (2009)

<sup>3</sup> Percentage point difference in graduation rates are for the class of 2005 between the urban and suburban segments of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, as calculated using the Cumulative Promotion Index, see Swanson (2009)

Source: Adapted from Wolf-Powers & Andreason (in press)

## Academic Capital Formation as a Conceptual Lens for Understanding the Forces that Contribute to College Access and Success for Urban Youth

Building on prior research and related theories, including social capital, class reproduction, and human capital, St. John and colleagues (2010) define academic capital “as social processes that build family knowledge of educational and career options and support navigation through educational systems and professional organizations” (p. 1). The authors identify six social processes that underlie Academic Capital Formation: easing students’ and parents’ concerns about college costs; providing supportive networks in schools and communities that can provide access to information and ease concerns (i.e., networking); promoting relationships with individuals who can be trusted to provide accurate information (i.e., trust); providing high-quality, accurate, and timely information (i.e., information); encouraging students to imagine themselves as college students and understand this role (i.e., cultural capital); and supporting transformational, cross-generational family uplift rather than class maintenance (i.e., “breaking habitual patterns”).

As discussed in the following sections, consideration of the contexts in which urban youth are embedded suggests the relevance of these social processes in understanding college access and success. Implicit in this discussion is the assumption that the college-related decisions and behaviors of urban youth reflect the layers of context in which they are embedded, including the characteristics and expectations of their families, the schools they attend and communities in which they live, the higher education institutions with which they interact, and the broader economic, social, and political context (Perna, 2006).

### *Concerns About College Costs*

The first social process that St. John and colleagues (2010) identify as promoting Academic Capital Formation is easing students’ and families’ concerns about college costs. Drawing on prior research as well as data describing the experiences of students in three comprehensive interventions (i.e., Indiana’s Twenty-first Century Scholars Program, the Washington State Achievers Program, and the Gates Millennium Scholars Program),



the authors explore the direct and indirect consequences of easing concerns about how to pay for college. As also argued by others (Perna, 2010; Perna & Steele, 2011), guaranteeing the availability of financial aid to pay college costs has the potential to promote college enrollment directly by providing students and their families with the resources required to pay college prices, and indirectly by promoting engagement in college-related behaviors (e.g., preparation, applications, etc.) by students who now have the expectation of being able to attend college.

Although some argue financial barriers influence college enrollment and attainment for only a small fraction of students (Cameron & Heckman, 2001), other data and research suggest financial resources are directly related to these outcomes. According to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2002), financial barriers prevent nearly half of all college-qualified low- and moderate-income high school graduates from enrolling in four-year colleges. Research also consistently shows that changes in tuition and financial aid have a greater effect on college enrollment for students from lower income families than from higher income families and for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites (Avery & Hoxby, 2004; Heller, 1997).

Financial aid also has the potential to influence college-related behaviors indirectly if students are aware of the availability of financial aid and are confident in their likelihood of receiving that aid (Perna, 2010). For example, if middle and high school students are confident they will have the financial resources necessary to pay for college, they may aspire to attend college, take the rigorous academic courses required for college entrance and success, and seek information about and sources of support for other aspects of the college enrollment process (Perna, 2010; Perna & Steele, 2011).

Nonetheless, the complexity of the need-based financial aid eligibility and application processes limits students' and families' ability to understand and anticipate the amount of financial aid they will receive (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2005; Perna & Steele, 2011). King (2004) estimated that 850,000 college students who were eligible for federal grant aid in 2000 did not complete the forms necessary to receive the aid. Based on this and other research, the federal Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) concluded that many students "don't enter college because of inadequate information and rising costs, combined with a confusing financial aid system" (p. vii).

Easing concerns about college costs is especially important to promoting college access and success for urban youth, given the high rates of poverty and unemployment and the low family incomes in many ur-

ban areas. Table 2.1 shows that the share of families with children living in poverty is substantially higher than the national average in 20 of the nation's 25 largest cities (18.6%). Data from the 2005–09 American Community Survey show that more than 30% of families with children lived below or near the poverty line in seven of the 25 largest cities: Detroit (46.5%), Memphis (36.9%), El Paso (35.6%), Philadelphia (34.2%), Dallas (33.6%), Houston (31.5%) and Chicago (30.6%) (Wolf-Powers & Andreason, in press).

Growing up in poverty is strongly correlated with low economic and social outcomes in later life. Using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Sharkey (2009) found that children who grew up in a neighborhood with a 20% to 30% poverty rate had a substantially greater rate of downward economic mobility than did children whose families had similar income levels but who grew up in neighborhoods with a poverty rate below 10% (64% versus 42%).

Moreover, poverty and race interact, with poverty having a greater negative effect on economic mobility for Blacks than for Whites (Sharkey, 2009). A substantially higher share of Black children (66%) than White children (6%) born between 1985 and 2000 lived in neighborhoods with a poverty rate of 20% or higher (Sharkey, 2009). Blacks are not only more likely than Whites to live in high-poverty neighborhoods, but are also more likely to experience downward mobility (80% versus 40%) (Sharkey, 2009).

### *Networking*

The second social process St. John and colleagues (2010) identify is “networking,” defined as providing supportive networks in schools and communities that can provide access to information and ease concerns. Attention to networking is especially important in promoting college access and success for students living in urban areas, as the low average levels of educational attainment in these areas suggest these youth often lack access to adults with direct college experience. Table 2.1 shows that the share of adults with at least a bachelor's degree is considerably lower than the national average (27.5%) in several large cities, including Detroit (12.1%), El Paso (20.9%), Philadelphia (22.1%), and Memphis (22.8%). Without access to college-educated adult mentors, youth may lack supportive networks to provide access to information that can ease concerns about college costs and shed light on other required college-related processes and behaviors (Klugman & Butler, 2009).

### *Trust*

The third social process that St. John and colleagues (2010) identify is “trust,” defined as promoting relationships with individuals who can be trusted to provide accurate information. Considerable data document the absence of sufficient resources to provide college-related counseling in U.S. high schools. These challenges are magnified in urban high schools, not only because of higher student to counselor ratios but also because of greater demands for non-college-related counseling, as well as other competing priorities (e.g., scheduling, standardized testing, social services requests) that limit the availability of time for college counseling (Klugman & Butler, 2009; McDonough, 2005; Perna et al., 2008). Moreover, students attending high schools with high proportions of low-income students may have less access to information about four-year colleges and universities, as college-related visits to these schools tend to come from for-profit and technical colleges and branches of the military rather than from four-year colleges and universities (Klugman & Butler, 2009).

### *Information*

The fourth social process that St. John and colleagues (2010) identify is “information,” defined as providing high-quality, accurate, and appropriate information at critical points in the college preparation process. Research consistently shows that students lack early, accurate, and complete information about college and student financial aid (Klugman & Butler, 2009; Perna, 2004; Perna & Steele, 2011). Plank and Jordan (2001) found that without access to “ample and accurate information about costs, financial assistance, and the college application process” (p. 950), many students decide against enrolling in college because they perceive it is not financially realistic. Pusser and colleagues (2007) concluded that a lack of accurate and complete information also limits college enrollment for adult students.

Having early, accurate, and complete information about student financial aid can influence whether a student obtains available resources. Although eligibility and receipt of federal financial aid does not vary based on the timing of the financial aid application, receipt of state financial aid may, especially in an economic downturn. In recent years, when demand for state aid has exceeded the availability of funds, several states (e.g., Illinois) have responded by awarding state financial aid on a first-come-first-served basis (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2011).

Awarding financial aid to those who meet deadlines and/or apply early privileges individuals who are knowledgeable about financial aid and related application processes. Levels of awareness and understanding of college prices and financial aid appear to be particularly low among groups overrepresented in many urban areas, including Hispanics and Blacks (Grodsky & Jones, 2004; Horn, Chen & Chapman, 2003; Immerwahr, 2003; Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, 2004; Tornatzky, Cutler & Lee, 2002) and individuals with no direct personal experience with college (Hossler, Schmit & Bouse, 1991).

### *Cultural Capital*

The fifth social process that St. John and colleagues (2010) identify as promoting college access and success is cultural capital, defined as encouraging students and their families to learn about college, address worries about college, and imagine themselves as college students. Cultural capital also involves learning about the culture that is relevant in a college or university and understanding the skills and competences that will be rewarded in that setting. The absence of a worldview that includes college as an appropriate option is suggested by the relatively low rates of high school completion in urban areas. Table 2.1 shows that the share of the population with less than a high school diploma is higher than the national average (15.5%) in 18 of the 25 largest cities.

### *Habitual Patterns*

The final social process that St. John and colleagues (2010) identify as promoting Academic Capital Formation is breaking habitual patterns. In many urban areas, low rates of educational attainment contribute to “a habitual pattern” in which college going is not the norm. Although parents and families typically have high aspirations for their children, other contextual forces often constrain educational attainment (Klugman & Butler, 2009; Perna & Titus, 2005). For example, some youth need to work or provide child care for siblings in order to help support the household. In addition, parents who have not attended college may lack the knowledge or resources to assist their children with college-going activities and may worry about the negative implications of college attendance “on their child’s cultural heritage and family connection” (Klugman & Butler, 2009, p. 6).

### Place-Based Scholarships

Considering the social forces that promote college access and success suggests the importance of interventions designed to alter reproduction processes in communities with little history of higher education, including many of our nation's urban centers. Numerous entities, including school districts, local colleges and universities, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations are involved in efforts to promote college access and success (Perna, 2002). Nonetheless, these interventions often operate in relative isolation and address only some of the barriers that limit college access and success for low-income and urban youth (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008; Perna, 2002).

Attention to Academic Capital Formation is particularly important in low-income neighborhoods, many of which are located in our nation's urban centers. As poignantly noted in the description of the federal Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, "Due to the turmoil they face, many high-poverty neighborhoods are unable to leverage valuable assets that provide a basis for economic growth and improvement in resident well-being" (White House, n.d., p. 1). Nonetheless, the White House goes on to speculate about how the resources embedded in many high-poverty urban areas may be utilized to promote Academic Capital Formation:

Many of these [high-poverty] neighborhoods are located near central business districts, transit lines, waterfronts, museums and other art and cultural institutions, or key anchor institutions such as hospitals and universities. Many have existing community-based organizations that have formed strong bonds and durable social capital. Although some community-based organizations have succeeded in developing good working relationships with business and institutional leaders in these centers of investment, these relationships need to be strengthened and local resources leveraged more fully so that more community members can gain the best possible access to quality education, services, and job opportunities. (White House, n.d., p. 4)

One relatively recent approach that recognizes the role of educational attainment in promoting the economic growth and vitality of an urban center is the "place-based" scholarship modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise, a citywide scholarship program in Michigan, announced in November

2005. In addition to promoting educational attainment, these programs are also typically intended to promote economic growth and development by incentivizing individuals to live in the school district's catchment area and encouraging businesses to remain in and/or relocate to the city.

In an attempt to understand the scope, reach, and availability of place-based scholarship programs for urban youth, we engaged in several procedures. To identify the population of programs we first compiled listings from three sources: the Kalamazoo Promise Program website, the Michigan Promise Zones website, and leads provided by Kalamazoo Promise researcher Dr. Michelle Miller-Adams of the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. We then explored the websites for any program described by these preliminary sources as a "Kalamazoo Promise," "city-promise," or "place-based" scholarship program. We attempted to contact by e-mail and/or telephone every program for which contact information was provided either on the program website or by a contact familiar with the program. We used these interactions to complete and verify information on key program characteristics and inquire if the individual knew of any additional promise programs. If the answer to the latter question was yes, we then sought to find out about those programs.

Our efforts yielded 35 place-based scholarship programs focused on cities, counties, or school districts, including 10 programs resulting from Michigan's Promise Zone initiative (see Table 2.2). This total excludes state-wide programs as well as programs in development that have not yet been announced publicly (e.g., La Crosse Promise), or have been announced publicly but are very early in their development (e.g. Allentown Promise); however, the list does include some programs that are more fully developed but not currently awarding scholarships (e.g., Muskegon Promise Zone).

The effects of these programs on college access and success have not yet been established, in part because the oldest programs have been in place for only a relatively short period of time. Nonetheless, a review of the characteristics of these programs in light of St. John et al.'s (2010) framework for Academic Capital Formation suggests the ways these programs may promote college access and success for low-income urban youth.

### *Concerns About College Costs*

A central feature of place-based scholarships is their potential to assure students and their families that funding will be available to offset the costs of attending college. Bartik and Miller-Adams (2009) stress the expecta-

Table 2.2 Place-Based Scholarship Programs

Program Name	Geographic Target of Scholarship
Arkadelphia Promise	Graduate from Arkadelphia High School (AR)
Bay Commitment Scholarship	Reside in Bay County; Attend Bay County public high school (MI)
College Bound Scholarship Program	Homeowners in Hammond, IN
CORE Scholars	Reside in Philadelphia; Graduate from Philadelphia high school (PA)
Denver Scholarship Foundation	Graduate from Denver Public Schools (CO)
Detroit College Promise	Reside in Detroit; attend Detroit Public School (MI)
Educate and Grow Scholarship Program	High school graduate in Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington Counties (TN)
El Dorado Promise	Graduate from El Dorado High School (AR)
Garrett County Scholarship Program	Reside in Garrett County; Graduate from Garrett County High School (MD)
Great River Promise	Attend Mississippi County public high school (AR)
Jackson Legacy	Reside in Jackson County; Attend Jackson County School (MI)
Kalamazoo Promise	Reside in boundaries of Kalamazoo Public Schools; Graduate from Kalamazoo Public High School (MI)
Legacy Scholars	Attend Battle Creek or Lakeview Public Schools (MI)
Leopard Challenge	Reside in District; Graduate from Norphlet High School (AR)
Milwaukee Promise	Reside in city of Milwaukee; Graduate from Milwaukee Public School (WI)
New Haven Promise	Reside in New Haven; Attend New Haven Public Schools or approved charter schools (CT)
Northport Promise	Graduate from Northport Public Schools (MI)
Peoria Promise	Reside in Peoria; Graduate from public high school (IL)
Pittsburgh Promise	Attend Pittsburgh Public Schools (PA)
Promise for the Future	Graduate from Pinal County High School (AZ)
San Francisco Promise	Attend public schools in San Francisco School District (CA)
Say Yes to College	Reside in City of Syracuse (NY)
School Counts Program	Graduate from public high school in Hopkins County (KY)

(Continued)

Table 2.2 (Cont.)

Program Name	Geographic Target of Scholarship
Sparkman Promise	Graduate from Sparkman High School (AR)
Ventura College Promise	Graduate from Ventura County high school (including GED) (CA)
Michigan Promise Zones	
Baldwin Promise	Reside in district; Attend and graduate from Baldwin High School
Battle Creek Promise Zone	Reside in and attend public and private schools in Battle Creek Public School District
Benton Harbor Promise Zone	Benton Harbor School District (MI)
Detroit Promise Zone	Detroit (MI)
Hazel Park Promise Zone	Resident in and graduate Hazel Park School District
Jackson Promise Zone	Reside in and graduate from Jackson Public School District School
Lansing Promise Zone	Graduate of public and private high schools located within the Lansing Public School boundaries
Muskegon Promise Zone	Graduate of Muskegon County High Schools
Pontiac Promise Zone	Pontiac School District (MI)
Saginaw Promise Zone	Saginaw School District (MI)

tion that the Kalamazoo Promise program will ease concerns about how to pay for college, stating this program

intends to change student and parent attitudes. The Promise allows all Kalamazoo Public School students and their families to know that they will be able to afford to go to college. It signals to those students and their families that the Kalamazoo community expects them to pursue postsecondary education. The hope is that these changes in expectations and attitudes will improve students' behavior and academic achievement. (Bartik & Miller-Adams, 2009, p. 11)

The extent to which place-based scholarship programs ease concerns about college costs likely depends on characteristics of the award.



Scholarship amounts vary, with some programs promising to cover (with or without other grant aid) tuition and mandatory fees (e.g., Arkadelphia Promise, El Dorado Promise, Kalamazoo Promise); others setting a maximum dollar award (e.g., CORE Scholars Detroit College Promise; Garrett County Scholarship Program; Jackson Legacy; Northport Promise; School Counts Program; Baldwin Promise); and others pegging the maximum award to tuition and fees at a particular college or university (e.g., College Board Scholarship Program). Permissible college choices also vary, as programs may allow recipients to attend any public college or university nationwide (e.g., Arkadelphia Promise; El Dorado Promise; Sparkman Promise); any public or private college or university in the state (e.g., Denver Scholarship Foundation; Pittsburgh Promise); any public college in the state (e.g., Detroit College Promise; Kalamazoo Promise; New Haven Promise); or a narrowly defined set of local colleges and universities (e.g., Bay Commitment Scholarship; Educate and Grow Scholarship Program; Garrett County Scholarship Program; Great River Promise; Jackson Legacy, Legacy Scholars; Peoria Promise; Promise for the Future; San Francisco Promise; School Counts Program; Ventura College Promise).

Some programs have or are working to build an endowment so as to guarantee the availability of funding in perpetuity (e.g., CORE Scholars, Denver Scholarship Foundation, Peoria Promise). Other programs state that the funding will be offered for only a specified number of years (e.g., 18 years for Arkadelphia Promise, 20 years for El Dorado Promise). The extent to which programs will be able to meet their funding expectations is unclear. Some programs clearly and explicitly state that availability of scholarships depends on “the sufficiency of available funding,” raising potential questions about how well these programs ease students’ and families’ cost-related concerns (Jackson Community Foundation, 2011).

The extent to which place-based scholarship programs ease concerns about how to pay for college costs also likely depends on when students and their families learn about the programs. With only a few exceptions, most programs require students to apply for the scholarship during their senior year of high school. A small number of programs require students to “register” or sign a “contract” with the program by the start of the ninth grade (e.g., Detroit College Promise, Promise for the Future). The New Haven Promise encourages all high school students to sign a “Promise pledge,” but allows students to apply for the scholarship during the spring of the senior year of high school. While not requiring early enrollment,

Milwaukee Promise and Pittsburgh Promise strive to begin preparing students as early as kindergarten to receive the promise award.

### *Networking*

In her examination of the Kalamazoo Promise, Miller-Adams (2010) argues that this type of program has greater potential than more narrowly targeted programs to address barriers to college access associated with lack of information and absence of role models. After the establishment of the Kalamazoo Promise, community leaders established “The Promise of a Greater Kalamazoo,” an organization designed to promote volunteering in the public schools (Dowd, 2008). Other efforts by the community, public schools, and local colleges and universities followed, including the establishment of tutoring and mentoring programs, support programs for college students, and internship and employment programs for college students and graduates (Dowd, 2008; Miller-Adams, 2010).

Whereas some programs focus on regularly disseminating information to students via newsletters and social media (e.g., CORE Scholars, Detroit College Promise), a small number of programs appear to be trying to more actively promote college-related knowledge and information. Affiliated with the Jackson Legacy program, the College Access Center is located in a large shopping mall and is designed to provide information about college and careers, as well as assistance with college and financial aid applications. The Ventura College Promise requires students to meet with a college counselor to develop an educational plan and goal. The Denver Scholarship Foundation operates 14 Future Centers. Located within Denver Public Schools, these centers are staffed with adult advisors who can provide direct support and assistance to high school students. The San Francisco Promise (2011) strives to “bridge both the financial gap and to provide a heightened level of proactive counseling about the offer of guaranteed access and how to prepare to succeed with it, including programs on all levels from 7th grade through junior year at SF State.”

### *Trust*

Place-based programs may also reduce students’ concerns about college through provisions that recognize the path to college degree completion is often not smooth or direct for low-income urban youth. The Kalamazoo Promise permits students to take up to 10 years to use their 130 credits of

funding. In addition, students who lose the scholarship due to insufficient academic progress may regain the scholarship if they “return to college and meet academic standards for one semester” (Miller-Adams, 2010, p. 12). Miller-Adams (2010, p. 12) speculates these programmatic features may provide “the opportunity for a second chance and the ample time frame for attempting to mitigate to some extent the disadvantages of low-income status when it comes to academic success.”

Nonetheless, few programs have this approach. Most award the scholarship only to students who enroll in an eligible college or university full-time in the fall following high school graduation. One program states that a student who fails to meet any of the program requirements for any reason will “permanently lose” the scholarship benefits (Central Arizona College, 2011).

### *Information*

One way promise-type scholarship programs may address information barriers that often limit college access and success for low-income youth is through simplicity. “First dollar” scholarship programs (e.g., Kalamazoo Promise) require students only to complete a one-page form; completion of the complex Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) is not required (Miller-Adams, 2010). Other programs are “last dollar” scholarships, whereby the award is reduced by other financial aid received (e.g., Educate and Grow, Great River Promise, Legacy Scholars, New Haven Promise). A few programs are “middle dollar” scholarships, whereby the scholarship award is reduced only by federal and state need-based aid received (e.g., Baldwin Promise). Middle- and last-dollar scholarships necessarily require completion of the FAFSA. In their exploratory study of students’ knowledge of state financial aid, Perna and Steele (2011) highlighted the potential benefits of the transparency and simplicity of the state merit aid programs in Florida and Georgia. Although also noting the disadvantages of state merit aid, their study points to the potential advantages of a program that provides easily understood information about the financial aid award students will receive if they meet eligibility criteria.

Nuances in eligibility criteria may also reduce simplicity. Most programs either have a minimum residency requirement (e.g., Denver Scholarship Foundation) or vary the amount of the scholarship based on length of residency (e.g., Arkadelphia Promise). Some programs (e.g., El Dorado Promise, New Haven Promise, Kalamazoo Promise) award full scholarships

only to students who have attended the city's public schools since kindergarten. These programs specify a sliding scale of program benefits; for example, the New Haven Promise and El Dorado Promise provide no scholarship for students who move to the district in or after the 10th grade. Even more restrictive is Hammond, Indiana's College Bound Scholarship Program, which limits program benefits to children of homeowners. As Dowd (2008) observes, programs with residency restrictions may "create a false sense of universalism" by purporting to promote "college for all" but providing benefits only to those who meet the requirements (p. 22).

Place-based scholarships may also have other eligibility criteria. Some are limited to students who earn a minimum grade point average in high school (e.g., Arkadelphia Promise, New Haven Promise, Promise for the Future; Sparkman Promise); a few are limited to students with financial need (e.g., CORE Scholars, Denver Scholarship Foundation) or potential first-generation college students (e.g., Bay Commitment Scholarship); and some programs require community service (e.g., Jackson Legacy, New Haven Promise).

### *Cultural Capital*

Place-based scholarship programs vary in the extent to which they work with schools and the community to develop and support increased educational expectations for students. Miller-Adams (2010) asserts that, although no direct financial support was provided, the local school district responded to the Kalamazoo Promise by developing several new initiatives, including "a college readiness course for all 10th graders, more opportunities for credit recovery to make possible on-time graduation and reduce the incentive to drop out because of missing credits, and greater attention to career awareness" (Miller-Adams, 2010, p. 14). The district also developed a strategic plan with "year-by-year expectations not just for students and teachers, but also parents, school staff, and the broader community" and implemented "an integrated approach to college and career awareness" beginning during middle school (Miller-Adams, p. 14).

Several programs report partnering with local schools and districts. The Jackson Legacy Program asserts that its "partner school districts are committed to student success" and "promote a culture that encourages the pursuit of postsecondary education for all students" (Jackson Community Foundation, 2011). Jackson Legacy partner schools promise to develop "plans" to work with local colleges and universities to reduce the need for

their graduates to participate in remedial education, improve college readiness, and facilitate student transitions from middle to high school and high school to higher education.

The New Haven Promise is partnering with College Summit to develop and implement regular infusions of information about college and careers into the educational experiences of students in Grades K–12. To build community knowledge and connections, the New Haven Promise is also creating “CollegeCorps,” a group of volunteers who meet with and provide information to parents about how to promote their children’s educational attainment.

These and other programs may provide students with relevant and necessary information about college-going. Yet the extent to which programs offer opportunities for students to learn, develop, and practice the skills and competencies required of a college student is unclear. More fully developing cultural capital may require program components that reveal the “hidden” norms of being a college student.

### *Habitual Patterns*

From her review of the Kalamazoo Promise Program, Miller-Adams (2010) concludes that the primary benefit of these programs is not the scholarship per se, but “their role as catalysts for change in the culture of the school district and for the alignment of a community’s resources in support of educational access for all” (p. 8). Aligning community resources to support college attainment has the potential to alter students’ and families’ perceptions of realistic and available postsecondary options, thereby promoting a habitus of college-going.

Nonetheless, the extent to which place-based scholarships emphasize economic development varies. For example, three of the six goals of the Educate and Grow Scholarship are directly related to economic development: “enable students to prepare for obtaining good, well-paying jobs within the region; provide an educated and well-qualified workforce; provide an incentive for young people to remain in the region” (Northeast State, 2011). The three goals of Hammond, Indiana’s College Bound Scholarship Program are to “increase home ownership, make education a priority, and improve the quality of life within the City” (City of Hammond, 2011).

The economic development dimension of place-based scholarships would seem to have the potential to help break “habitual patterns” of non-college going in these communities. As with other place-based scholarship

programs, one goal of the Kalamazoo Promise is to encourage college-educated individuals to stay in, move to, or return to the city (Miller-Adams, 2010). The program is also intended to encourage employers who need college-educated workers to locate in the city. Together, these multiple efforts may help transform a community into one where college-going becomes the norm. As Chuck Wilbur, education policy advisor to former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and founder of PromiseZones.org, notes, the effects of place-based programs must be measured in generational terms (C. Wilbur, personal communication, June 1, 2011).

### Philadelphia as a Case Study

In order to further understand potential citywide approaches to promoting college access and success for low-income urban youth, this section considers Philadelphia as a case study. Many indicators suggest the importance of improving educational attainment in Philadelphia. Philadelphia Mayor Nutter (2011) reports that, of the 12,230 ninth graders who entered high school in 1999, 58% graduated within six years, 24% entered college within a year of high school graduation, and 10% graduated from college within 10 years. Only 22% of Philadelphia adults hold at least a bachelor's degree (Table 2.1), the 92nd lowest rate among the nation's 100 largest cities (Nutter, 2010).

Philadelphia's low level of educational attainment is particularly surprising given the large number of local colleges and universities. The Philadelphia metropolitan area is home to more than 100 colleges and universities; together, these institutions enroll the fourth highest number of full-time equivalent students and award the third highest number of degrees per 10,000 residents in the nation (Select Greater Philadelphia, 2011).

Philadelphia's place-based scholarship program, College Opportunity Resources for Education (CORE), was established in 2003 by U.S. Congressman Chaka Fattah as CORE Philly and renamed CORE Scholars in 2009. Current program partners include the School District of Philadelphia, NASA, the U.S. Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, Solutions for Progress, and Ames Research Center. Unlike most other programs, the CORE Philadelphia

Scholarship (aka CORE Scholars) provides scholarships to Philadelphia residents who graduate from not only public high schools, but also private, charter, and parochial high schools. Also unlike most other place-based programs, scholarship amounts vary based on financial need and available funding, with awards ranging from \$250 to \$3,500 per semester (D. Reavis, personal communication, June 28, 2011). Awards are available only for the first year of college and require students to attend a two-year or four-year college full-time in the fall following high school graduation. In 2010 the program began offering college-preparatory support and college/career planning tools (e.g., information on financial aid and scholarship deadlines, summer jobs, and internships) online using Facebook, Twitter, and a blog. The program seeks to change “habits of mind and culture” via its AmeriCorps civic engagement program, an annual Alumni Network conference, an annual college send-off conference for graduating high school seniors, and a planned middle school conference (D. Reavis, personal communication, June 28, 2011). In the first six years of operation, about 16,000 students received more than \$27 million in scholarships. About half of recipients are Black, and half are the first in their family to attend college. The six-year bachelor’s degree attainment rate for the first group of CORE recipients was 44% (CORE Scholarships, 2011).

In addition to CORE Scholars, Philadelphia is engaged in other efforts to promote the educational attainment of its residents. To better meet local workforce needs, Mayor Nutter (2010) identified college attainment as one of his top three priorities for his first term and set a goal of doubling the percentage of Philadelphians who hold at least a bachelor’s degree from 18% to 36% by 2018. To help achieve this goal, he created an Office of Education and established the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success (Dagenais, 2010). With representatives from local businesses, city government, the school district, colleges and universities, and nonprofit organizations, the Council is responsible for “providing policy direction, allocating funds, and monitoring progress towards Mayor Nutter’s goals” (Nutter, 2010, p. 6). The Council Leadership Team, comprised of the mayor’s chief education officer, the superintendent of the school district, a representative from a large local employer, and a university president, determines the priorities for the Council. The Council has promised to assess its effectiveness in terms of such measures as high school graduation rates, college enrollment rates, college persistence rates, and four-year and six-year bachelor’s degree completion rates.

Without direct or formal authority over the city's public schools or local colleges and universities, a mayor often has few levers for improving college access and success for low-income urban youth. Recognizing these structural constraints, Mayor Nutter's Office of Education has focused on serving as a "facilitator and catalyst" and developing coalitions to support a citywide effort to improve educational attainment (Nutter, 2010, p. 4).

The following sections summarize two additional citywide efforts to advance the Academic Capital Formation of city residents: PhillyGoes2College and Graduate!Philadelphia. As with CORE Scholars and other place-based scholarship programs, limited rigorous research has been conducted. Nonetheless, a review of these efforts in the context of the social processes underlying Academic Capital Formation suggests their potential to improve college access and success for urban youth.

### *PhillyGoes2College*

Created by Mayor Nutter and officially launched in 2010 with a \$750,000 grant from the Lenfest Foundation, PhillyGoes2College seeks "to involve all segments of the community in motivating Philadelphians to pursue and complete a college degree" by addressing the barriers that often limit educational attainment (Dagenais, 2010). This initiative is designed to provide college-going assistance to anyone interested in enrolling in college, including middle and high school students, "comebackers" (adult Philadelphians who have earned some college credits), and adults with no previous college experience.

PhillyGoes2College focuses on providing information and connections to resources via a website and referral center. The referral center is located in city hall, in space shared with a college access center run by the Philadelphia Education Fund; however, the program is accessed primarily via its website, which the program director estimates averages 1,000 hits per week (B. Mattleman, personal communication, April 20, 2011). The website is intended to make relevant information and resources from different organizations easily accessible in one location. The website offers information specific to three audiences (students, parents/mentors, and adult students) in both English and Spanish (PhillyGoes2College.com, 2010). Individuals may also sign-up to receive other information, including "instant updates" and reminders about deadlines via Facebook, Twitter, and text messages. Like the city's telephone referral service for non-emergencies, the program strives to be the 3-1-1 for college information and to promote the message



that every Philadelphian can go to college (B. Mattleman, personal communication, April 20, 2011).

PhillyGoes2College is funded primarily by foundations with no direct city funding (Dagenais, 2010; B. Mattleman, personal communication, April 20, 2011). Staff (i.e., two paid staff and one Vista volunteer) report to, and fund-raising is managed by, the city's Office of Education. PhillyGoes2College boasts partnerships with a number of organizations located throughout the city including the School District of Philadelphia Office of College and Career Awareness (OCCA), Community College of Philadelphia, Free Library of Philadelphia, Graduate! Philadelphia, Mayor's Commission on Literacy, Philadelphia College Prep Roundtable, and Philadelphia Education Fund (PhillyGoes2College.com).

In terms of the six social processes that promote Academic Capital Formation, PhillyGoes2College emphasizes providing information to ease students' concerns about how to pay for college, as well as information and assistance with college-related tasks. The program appears to do relatively little to build social capital or networks of people who are college educated or planning to attend college, however. Data collected from focus groups with 300 Philadelphia teens and surveys completed by 705 Philadelphia teens illustrate the need for attention to concerns about costs and the lack of financial aid information (Salas & Abdul-Rahman, 2010). These data document students' concerns about how to pay for college and the use of loans, as well as gaps in knowledge about the availability of and procedures for applying for student financial aid. Students also described the need to have college-related information available in the early years of high school. Suggesting the benefits of building social capital and networks, students also wished to have mentors who could provide individualized attention and assistance when teachers and counselors were unavailable (Salas & Abdul-Rahman).

The program offers free assistance with completing financial aid applications and preparing for the SAT as well as college preparation sessions and college fairs. In the winter of 2009, the program and a coalition of community partners recruited and trained 100 city employees to help students and their families complete the FAFSA. The city reports that, following this effort, the number of financial aid applications submitted increased by 12% over the prior year (Nutter, 2010). The program also collaborates with the Philadelphia School District and the Campaign for Working Families to provide free FAFSA and tax return preparation assistance at local community centers and churches (B. Mattleman, personal communication, April 20, 2011).

Although rigorous research is required to demonstrate actual benefits, the potential value of not just making financial aid available via federal and state student aid programs but also providing assistance to students with the process of completing financial aid applications is articulated by Mary Rochford, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:

The PhillyGoes2College Campaign is a fabulous opportunity for the parents and guardians of our 2009 high school graduates in the City of Philadelphia to gain a greater percentage of federal dollars to support college tuitions. Too often it is only after the fact that parents and guardians learn of such assistance programs. Knowing this process upfront will greatly increase the opportunity to secure the necessary funds for many of our aspiring college students. (Nutter, 2010)

### *Graduate!Philadelphia*

Another citywide effort to promote college access and success is Graduate!Philadelphia (G!P). Established in 2005, G!P is designed to improve degree attainment of city residents by helping the city's 73,000 adult students who have some college credits reenroll and complete their degree (Nutter, 2010). G!P is a joint initiative of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, operated in partnership with the Philadelphia Education Fund and funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the City of Philadelphia. As with PhillyGoes2College, the program purports to be the only program nationwide wherein major stakeholders in one region come together to promote college degree attainment and provide needed services and supports. G!P partners with employers and organized labor, community-based organizations, colleges, foundations, government agencies, and other entities.

College partners include 15 local colleges and universities that are regionally accredited and offer courses that are flexible and convenient for adults (H. Sheffer, personal communication, June 7, 2011). Representatives from the financial aid and admissions staffs of these institutions come to the G!P office to assist students with understanding such issues as course schedules, financial packages, and credit loads/transfer (B. Mattleman, personal communication, April 20, 2011). The partner colleges also participate in G!P's Returning to Learning College Fairs for Adults, events designed to provide adult prospective students

with access to college advisors and “a quick, intensive one-stop-shopping experience” (Graduate!Philadelphia, 2011, p. 3).

From the perspective of Academic Capital Formation, G!P is designed to address several of the processes identified by St. John and colleagues (2010). To alleviate concerns about college costs, program staff advises clients on issues of financial literacy, as well as college costs and financial aid. Advisors also prepare clients with questions about financial aid to ask college representatives. In addition, the program works with college partners to secure tuition discounts for students (H. Sheffer, personal communication, June 7, 2011).

G!P seeks to promote networks in which every individual knows someone who understands how to attend and succeed in college (e.g., “one degree of separation”) and can make college knowledge accessible and relevant (H. Sheffer, personal communication, June 7, 2011). To promote networking, the program is now developing a mentoring-ambassadorship program to train former clients who have successfully returned to college to work with new clients. Program staff seeks to build trust by working with colleges to change practices that are not conducive to adults returning to school and to share information about how colleges may better serve the population. The program also capitalizes on “trusted messengers” in the community (e.g., churches) to promote program services to potential clients. To further build trust, program staff strives to ensure that information provided to clients is accurate and complete (H. Sheffer, personal communication, June 7, 2011).

G!P offers “tiered levels of information and guidance,” providing general and basic information on college completion to large numbers of individuals via its website, fairs, and large group sessions at employer sites, and one-on-one assistance to those who register with G!P (OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2009). For the latter group, G!P seeks to provide, at no charge, help “from application through graduation” through one-to-one college consultation with a G!P advisor and/or a college partner advisor, assistance with financial aid, college-related workshops, and ongoing communication (OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2009; Walsh, 2011). Staff strives to use a “just in time” approach to providing information at four stages of the college-going process: inquiry, pre-enrollment, enrollment, and graduation. Staff stresses the perceived importance of providing constant communication and tailoring information to meet individual needs. Consultations may include attention to academic counseling and the availability of academic support, navigating work and family schedules,

accessing a computer, and improving study skills. The program also strives to provide tools and services designed to promote academic achievement (e.g., test taking, note writing, and study skills). In short, program advisors seek to “hold your hand until you get through college” (B. Mattleman, personal communication, April 20, 2011).

G!P may address the social process that St. John and colleagues (2010) define as cultural capital by encouraging clients to see themselves as successful college students. Unlike programs serving first-time college goers, G!P serves adults who at one time envisioned themselves going to college and took steps to attain that vision, but then “something went wrong,” causing them to drop out (H. Sheffer, personal communication, June 7, 2011). The program purposively seeks to offer a positive and supportive atmosphere for clients, undergirded by the conviction that each client who seeks to complete college can do so (Walsh, 2011).

The program is designed to break habitual patterns by promoting “a political and cultural environment among residents of the region that recognizes that college completion is a practical necessity for both individual and regional economic progress” (Graduate!Philadelphia, 2011, p. 2). Program data indicate that typical clients are Black women, with an average age of 40; 70% of clients are heads of households (OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2009). Helping these adults return to and complete college degrees likely has benefits that reach beyond the individual student into her family and community.

Although limited to descriptive analyses, available data point to the program’s reach and promise. After two years of direct service, 30,000 individuals accessed information through G!P’s website and 2,500 used in-person services. Of these individuals, 850 have re-enrolled and 1,300 are engaged in some aspects of the re-enrollment process (Graduate!Philadelphia, 2011). Of those who re-enrolled, 93% have persisted in college and 68% have completed degrees (Graduate!Philadelphia, 2011).

## Conclusion

Promoting college access and success for low-income youth is especially challenging in urban areas characterized by high poverty, high

unemployment, and low educational attainment. Ideally, efforts to improve college access and success for urban youth would be comprehensive, including attention to the full range of social processes that play a role long term, beginning at least in the middle school years (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001; Perna, 2002; St. John et al., 2010). Nonetheless, as evidenced by recent state revenue shortfalls in many states and resulting cuts to K–12 and higher education,<sup>1</sup> constraints on the availability of public resources will likely continue to restrict efforts to develop and sustain new, comprehensive, long-term interventions.

This chapter suggests the potential benefits of a citywide approach that simultaneously recognizes the multiple social forces that influence college access and success for low-income urban youth and the potential benefits of coordinating efforts across multiple stakeholders. Although little research has rigorously evaluated effectiveness, citywide efforts hold promise for addressing the barriers that limit college going and signaling to a community that habitual patterns of non-college going must change.

Nonetheless, implementing a place-based scholarship program is not easy. Given variations in local contexts and challenges, place-based programs are “not one size fits all, not a panacea, and not appropriate for all communities” (C. Wilbur, personal communication, June 1, 2011). A substantial financial commitment is required to establish a large-scale place-based scholarship program; for example, Yale University pledged up to \$4 million per year for eight years to support the New Haven Promise program (Bailey, 2010). Some cities have attempted but abandoned efforts to establish a citywide program because of fundraising demands (e.g., Akron, Ohio; Davenport, Iowa; Miller-Adams, 2009). Programs that use public dollars, especially when those dollars are raised through mechanisms that disproportionately burden low-income individuals, can also be problematic, especially when those being taxed may be less likely to meet the criteria to qualify for the program (Dowd, 2008). For example, the promise program in Hammond, Indiana, is paid via public revenues received from taxes on casinos and limits program benefits to children of homeowners. One unique approach to address funding challenges is

<sup>1</sup> As just one example, in May 2011, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives voted to reduce state funding to public schools by \$1 billion, the same amount proposed by Governor Tom Corbett (Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, 2011). The governor also proposed reducing state funding to public colleges and universities by 52%, that is, \$630 million (Hagerty, 2011).

Michigan's Promise Program, created by the state legislature via Public Acts 549 and 550 in 2008. This legislation requires designated public-private place-based partnerships (i.e., "Promise Zones") to raise funds to cover tuition and mandatory fees for graduating seniors for the first two years of the program but permits programs to receive state funding captured via a state tax on growth in the district in subsequent years.

The effectiveness of place-based scholarships may be restricted by other forces, even if funds are secured. One challenge may be uneven use of the scholarships within a school district, with greater usage likely in "the newer, less dense, and more suburban-like townships that surround the city" than in the urban core (Miller-Adams, 2006, p. 2). Place-based scholarships may also have limited impact on the racial/ethnic and income segregation of an urban center (Dowd, 2008; Miller-Adams, 2006) or the quality of public K-12 education low-income youth need to academically enroll and succeed in college (Dowd, 2008). The extent to which place-based scholarships improve educational outcomes for groups of students who are historically underserved may also be limited by restrictive eligibility criteria, especially when those criteria disproportionately exclude students from low-income or other groups (e.g., homeownership as in the College Bound program in Hammond, Indiana) (Dowd, 2008).

Few funds may be available for schools or neighborhoods to address the many nonfinancial resources that often restrict college access and success for urban youth, both within and beyond public schools themselves. As Miller-Adams (2006, p. 6) acknowledges,

The barriers faced by many of the [Kalamazoo Public School] district's students extend well beyond the purview of the schools to include issues such as a lack of parental support, an absence of neighborhood role models, or the punishing effects of poverty. Support services such as nutrition programs, mental health care, and mentoring are crucial, but despite a considerable outpouring of volunteer energy and a large network of social service agencies, the mission of organizing these services is a formidable one.

The extent to which a place-based program promotes economic development by attracting businesses and jobs that recruit and retain college-educated workers (and thus help to break habitual patterns) is unclear (Miller-Adams, 2006). It is also unclear whether program recipients will return to the urban area after receiving their college degree, especially

as most programs include no explicit requirement or incentive to do so (Dowd, 2008).

Nonetheless, Miller-Adams (2006) points to the potential of promise scholarship programs to signal a community's commitment to education, and speculates that "By calling into action coalitions of residents, businesses, and organizations working strategically to leverage its potential, the Kalamazoo Promise may emerge as an important new instrument for economic revitalization."

Along the same lines, the overview of Philadelphia's recent efforts suggests the potential catalytic role a city may play in coordination of limited available resources among government agencies, private foundations, school districts, colleges and universities, and other local organizations. Cities may be ideally situated to advance the formation of academic capital through their ability to convene partners, improve public will, and encourage investment in programs from potential partners (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008).

Based on their case study analyses of Philadelphia and Miami, Dougherty and Lempa (2008) characterized Philadelphia's approach to promoting college access and success as "a system with a history of developing individual programs and an emergent focus on coordination and alignment" (p. 8). Nonetheless, even with the Mayor's leadership, involvement from the school district, "a strong network of nonprofit providers and local program models," and attention to college enrollment and degree completion by local colleges and universities, Philadelphia continues to experience challenges to its "system of college access and success" (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008, p. 10). These challenges include

lack of clarity regarding who is served by the multiple programs, fragmentation of service delivery, an emphasis on reactive college access and success supports, targeting students near the end of high school rather than earlier in their schooling, and low transfer rates from two- to four-year colleges. (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008, p. 10)

Comparing the citywide approaches to college access and success in Philadelphia and Miami suggests particular aspects of the local context may influence the ability of stakeholders to align and coordinate resources (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008). Philadelphia's "college access and success system" may be more coordinated and less fragmented than Miami's, at least in part, because just one school district operates in the city of Philadelphia,

compared with 30 in the Miami Dade County Public School system. Miami's system may be "emerging but still fragmented," at least in part because of challenges related to budget cuts and competing interests (e.g., greater local attention to early childhood than college education).

Local leadership may also play a critical role (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008). In their case study analyses, Dougherty and Lempa point to the importance of Philadelphia's mayor clearly articulating the goal of raising college attainment for Philadelphia youth. Leaders may productively advance a coordinated approach to college access and success by collecting and using relevant data and research, convening partners, educating the public about the importance of education, allocating resources to programs, and supporting policy changes that encourage coordination and alignment (Dougherty & Lempa, 2008). Yet reliance on local government leadership for a citywide approach not only depends on the characteristics of particular leaders but also raises questions about sustainability of efforts beyond a current leader's tenure. Sustaining a citywide approach over time may require the involvement of non-government leadership.

Despite the challenges, the potential of citywide efforts to promote Academic Capital Formation is implied in the recently created federal Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative stresses the value of an integrated and coordinated effort that is "place-based, to leverage investments by geographically targeting resources and drawing on the compounding effect of well-coordinated action" as well as adaptive to local conditions and cognizant of the "interconnected problems in distressed neighborhoods" (White House, n.d.).

Clearly additional data and research are required to better understand the contribution of citywide approaches to Academic Capital Formation. More information is needed about which approaches "work," why, and in what contexts (Perna, 2010). More information is also needed about how to overcome the challenges to developing a place-based scholarship program or a citywide approach to create a college access and success "system." Any new effort should be accompanied by strategies for collecting and analyzing data that can be used to monitor and assess effectiveness. Data collection efforts need to go beyond simply tracking the number of website hits and clients served via calls and emails to more completely understand what and how particular efforts promote college access and success for low-income urban youth.

Although more research is required, the urgency of identifying effective citywide approaches cannot be understated. As the White House



succinctly states in its rationale for the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative:

Failing to address economic distress at the neighborhood level not only limits our pool of human capital and diminishes regional and national economic capacity, but also perpetuates disadvantages experienced by low-income families and exacerbates disparities in our society. (White House, n.d., p. 4)

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ISSN 0270-1448

Set ISBN-10: 0-404-10100-3  
Set ISBN-13: 978-0-404-10100-8

Volume 26: ISBN-10: 0-404-10226-3  
Volume 26: ISBN-13: 978-0-404-10226-5  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 77-83137

All AMS Books are printed on acid-free paper that meets the guidelines for performance and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

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[www.amspressinc.com](http://www.amspressinc.com)

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