**CPSI ■ mdrc**
COLLEGE PROMISE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

How to Use
MDRC's College Promise Success Initiative Cost Tool

1. **Activate macros:** When you open the workbook for the first time, you may receive a yellow message toward the top of your Excel application that tells you that macros have been disabled. To use the tool, click on the button that says "Enable Content" in the security warning.

⚠ SECURITY WARNING   Macros have been disabled.   Enable Content
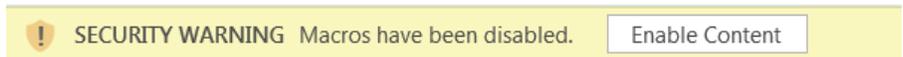
Once you click Enable Content, the yellow box will disappear and you should be on a screen that says "Welcome to the MDRC College Promise Success Initiative Program Cost Calculator" at the top.

2. **Choose components:** Read through the instructions on the page and then uncheck any of the five component boxes that you do not plan to include in your program. You will only be presented with the calculation options for a specific component if you check the box for that component. If you are unsure, you can always come back to this screen later and update your selection. Note that there is an additional feature, "Other costs," that does not ask for you to check the box. This "Other Costs" screen is available to add any additional costs outside of the choices offered, and is presented by default.

3. **Choose your cohort size:** Click on the box to the right of "Students served per cohort" (500 by default) to activate the drop-down menu and select a cohort size. For the purposes of the calculator, a cohort is a group of students that enters your Promise program at the beginning of the academic year (in the fall semester) and continues, without additional student enrollments, through the length of your program. If in the drop-down menu not all values are immediately visible, scrolling up or down can allow you to create cohorts of 0 to 1,100 students. Note: The calculator presents the cost of the program for an individual cohort. If you would like to calculate the cost for multiple cohorts over multiple years, you will need to run the calculator once for an individual cohort, save the results, and then run it separately for another cohort.

4. **Choose your program length (in years):** Click on the box to the right of "Program length (years)" to select the number of years your program will provide support to students. The calculator assumes that certain components (tuition, textbooks) will be offered for the full length of the program. However, the milestone incentive and other costs can be linked to an individual year.

5. **Select your retention rates:** Select the percentage of students who you expect to return to school/your program in Year 2 and in Year 3 from their respective drop-down menus. Note that both retention rates refer to the original cohort size. For example, a cohort of 1,000 students with a Year 2 retention rate of 60 percent would have 600 students enrolled in Year 2. If that same program had a Year 3 retention rate of 50 percent it would have 500 students in Year 3. Note also that the third-year retention rate should be lower than the second-year retention rate (the drop-down list for Year 3 will update depending upon the input for Year 2).

   Retention rates are used to calculate the number of students who will receive program benefits. As a result, the retention rates that you select should also account for graduation rates. For example, if a program expects 5 percent of its students to graduate after Year 2, then the Year 3 retention rate should be reduced by 5 percentage points. A 50 percent retention rate in Year 3 would become 45 percent after accounting for the 5 percent graduation rate.

   If your program operates for a shorter period than three years, the retention rates for the extra years will not be included in any calculations.

6. **Pick your summer enrollment rate:** After picking your retention rates, select the percentage of retained students that you expect to enroll each summer. If your program is offering financial assistance during the summer, this rate will be factored into the cost of your program if you include tuition or textbook coverage for the summer, or if you include a monthly incentive in the summer months. Note: You will be able to indicate later if you do not plan to offer any summer support, and in that case this rate will not be included in any calculations.

7. **Click "Start":** Once finished updating the choices, click the Start button to go to the next screen. You can always return to this first page and update your selections. Each tab allows you to start over.

Tuition Coverage

Inputs: On all pages, items needing your input are in light gray boxes.

1. **Select your average tuition coverage per semester:** This field captures the tuition your program plans to cover per student during a fall or spring semester. The average tuition represents the value that the program will actually pay. If a large percentage of the students in your program are receiving full Pell Grants, the average amount of tuition coverage will be much lower than actual price of tuition at the college.

2. **Confirm whether the program will cover fees:** Will your program cover fees such as those related to registration? (NOTE: Exclude textbooks from this calculation.) If your program covers fees, change the value to "Yes" and the "Average semester fees" box will change to light gray, indicating that your input is needed.

   a. *Update the average semester fees:* If your program is covering fees, confirm the average value that students receive each semester. As with tuition, the amount entered should be equal to the amount the program will pay, not the average cost of fees for students at the college.

3. **Confirm whether summer coverage is offered:** Will your program cover summer tuition? Changing the value to "Yes" will change the "Avg. summer tuition coverage" box to light gray, indicating that your input is needed. Note that the summer enrollment rate entered on the Introduction screen will be included in the calculation of the cost of the summer tuition coverage. To update the enrollment rate, click Restart. (NOTE: You will not lose any of your work by clicking Restart.)

   a. *Average summer tuition coverage:* On average, how much does the summer term cost per student? Since students may tend to enroll full time in fall and spring but part time in summer, the value in this field may be lower than the average tuition covered per semester. However, the relationship between the values may be complicated by the fact that other scholarship funds may not cover the full amount of summer tuition.

Outputs: The headings in the black boxes highlight the calculator's outputs on this tab. Using the inputs on this tab, the number of students in the cohort, the retention rates, and the program length, values are calculated for the following:

1. First-year total tuition coverage cost
2. Total tuition coverage cost

Textbook Stipend

NOTE: On the final summary tab, the costs for each component for each year are shown in a report.

Inputs: On all pages, items needing your input are in light gray boxes.

1. **Insert textbook stipend per semester:** Select the amount provided, on average, to each student for a fall or spring semester. Depending on your program, this amount could be a standardized stipend or the average amount that students are given after other sources of funding have been used.

2. **Confirm whether summer textbook coverage is offered:** Will your program cover summer textbook costs? Changing the value to "Yes" will change the "Avg. summer semester book cost" to light gray, indicating your input is needed. Note that the summer enrollment rate entered on the Introduction screen will be included in the calculation of the cost of the summer textbooks. To update the enrollment rate, click Restart. (NOTE: You will not lose any of your work by clicking Restart.)

   a. *Avg. summer semester book cost:* This amount may be lower than the amount for a fall or spring semester since students are likely to enroll in fewer courses. However, it's also possible that some of this reduction in cost could be offset by a lack of outside funding sources for textbooks for summer courses.

Outputs: The headings in the black boxes show the calculator's outputs:

1. *First-year total textbook stipend cost*
2. *Total textbook stipend cost*

CPSI
COLLEGE
PROMISE
SUCCESS
■ mdrc
INITIATIVE

Monthly Incentive

Inputs: On all pages, items needing your input are in light gray boxes.

1. **Insert the monthly incentive value:** Choose the cost of the monthly incentive for fall and spring terms.

2. **Update the monthly incentive take-up rate:** This rate represents the percentage of retained students who you expect to complete the monthly requirement to earn the incentive. For example, if students need to meet with advisers or do some other task to receive the incentive, this rate will be lower than 100 percent.

3. **Confirm whether a summer incentive will be offered:** Choose whether students will be able to receive incentives in the summer. If you choose "Yes," the summer incentive take-up rate will also be light gray. Note that the summer enrollment rate entered on the Introduction screen will be included in the calculation of the cost of the summer incentive. To update the enrollment rate, click Restart. (NOTE: You will not lose any of your work by clicking Restart.)

   a. *Summer incentive take-up rate:* Choose what percentage of the students enrolled in summer are expected to receive the summer incentive.

Note that students can receive incentives for a maximum of 11 months:

- 4 fall months
- 4 spring months
- 3 summer months

Outputs: The headings in the black boxes show the calculator's outputs:

1. *Monthly incentive cost (during the first year's fall and spring semesters)*

2. *First-year monthly incentive cost*

3. *Total monthly incentive cost*

Milestone Incentive

For this page, you can select between one and five milestones for which students will receive incentives. These incentives can be assigned to a single year during the span of the program, or students can receive these incentives annually.

Inputs: Each category of inputs contains five gray boxes for you to fill. You only need to fill boxes for the number of milestones your program has. The other boxes can be left alone.

1. **Description:** This column contains five boxes for you to fill with incentive descriptions since the design of milestone incentives will rely entirely on your program design. You can fill between one and five of these boxes, depending on how many incentives your program will include.

2. **Milestone year:** This column of five boxes is populated to provide examples. Do not go to the row that shows the value that you want. Instead, start with the first row and change the Milestone year value to reflect your needs. Clicking on a given box will activate a drop-down menu, which will allow you to select whether the incentive will be received in Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, or annually. For example, if you want to give three incentives in the first year, you could change the values of the first three boxes to "1" and then leave the last two boxes untouched. (NOTE: If you select a year value greater than the length of your program, the totals on this tab and on the summary report will not include the milestone.)

3. **Cost estimate:** For each milestone, choose the following:

    a. *Incentive cost:* How much you expect the incentive to cost per student. For annual incentives, this amount should be the cost per student per year.

    b. *Percentage completed:* The percentage of retained students who will receive the incentive.

Outputs: The headings in the black boxes show the calculator's outputs:

    1. *First-year milestone incentive cost:* This amount includes any milestone with a "Milestone year" value of "1" or "Annual."

    2. *Total milestone incentive cost:* This amount includes all milestones, with annual milestones repeated by the number of program years, taking retention rates into account.

Success Coaching/Advising

Inputs: On all pages, items needing your input are in light gray boxes.

1. **Update coach/adviser-to-student ratio:** Choose how many students each coach/adviser will have in his or her caseload. This input will be used to calculate how many coaches are needed each year based on your total number of students served and the retention rates.

2. **Insert avg. coach/adviser salary:** Choose the annual salary for the coaches/advisers, excluding benefits.

3. **Select the Avg. coach/advisor emp. benefits pct.:** This number is the cost of the coaches'/advisers' health insurance, retirement, etc., as a percentage of their salaries. For example, if the coaches'/advisers' benefits cost $4,000 and their annual salary is $40,000, input "10%" in this box. The output called "First year coaches/advisers cost" will then account for $44,000 per coach/adviser.

Outputs: The headings in the black boxes show the calculator's outputs:

1. *First-year coaches/advisers required:* This calculation divides the total number of the students by the number of students per adviser and then rounds up, since it is not possible to have a fraction of an adviser.

2. *First-year coaches/advisers cost:* The total cost of coaches/advisers in the first year.

3. *Second-year coaches/advisers required:* This calculation is the same as #1 but accounts for the Year 2 retention rate.

4. *Second-year coaches/advisers cost:* The total cost of coaches/advisers in the second year.

5. *Third-year coaches/advisers required:* This calculation is the same as #1 but accounts for the Year 3 retention rate.

6. *Third-year coaches/advisers cost:* The total cost of coaches/advisers in the third year.

7. *Total coaches/advisers cost:* This amount is the sum of each year's total salary.

Other Costs

For this page, you can select between one and five other costs to the program. These costs can be assigned to a single year during the span of the program, or they can be incurred annually.

Inputs: Each category of inputs contains five gray boxes for you to fill. You only need to fill boxes for the number of other costs your program has. The other boxes can be left alone.

1. **Description:** This column contains five boxes for you to fill with cost descriptions. These boxes can capture anything from administrative costs to office space. You can fill between one and five of these boxes, depending on how many costs you want to include.

2. **Cost year:** This column of five boxes is populated to provide examples. Do not go to the row that shows the value that you want. Instead, start with the first row and change the Cost year value to reflect your needs. Clicking on a given box will activate a drop-down menu, which will allow you to select whether the cost will be incurred in Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, or annually. For example, if you want to track three separate costs in the first year, you could change the values of the first three boxes to "1" and then leave the last two boxes untouched. (NOTE: If you select a year value greater than the length of your program, the totals on this tab and on the summary report will not include the cost.)

3. **Cost estimate:** For each cost, choose the following:

   a. *Cost type:* Is the cost incurred on a per-student basis or in total? Per-student costs will factor in the retention rates for Years 2 and 3 when appropriate.

   b. *Cost amount:* If your cost is a per-student cost, submit the per-student value. If your cost is a total cost, enter the total value.

Outputs: The headings in the black boxes show the calculator's outputs:

   1. *First-year other cost:* This amount includes any cost with "Cost year" value of "1" or "Annual."

   2. *Total other incentive cost:* This amount includes all Other costs, with annual costs repeated three times, taking retention rates into account for per-student costs.

MDRC College Promise Success Initiative Program Cost Calculator Summary Report

Inputs:

- **Comments:** This section is for you to save comments for yourself or your team.

- **Students served per cohort (optional):** If you want to keep all other values the same but change the number of students served per cohort, you may input a value here and click "Update."

Outputs: The outputs in this sheet summarize all the other information that you have entered in the previous sheets. To adjust any of this information, you may click Restart. (NOTE: You will not lose any of your work by clicking Restart.)