

MDRC provides the following Q&A regarding the Request for Proposals for the [Promise Success Initiative](#).

1. Who is eligible to apply for this project?

We take an expansive view of college promise and free college programs. If your program guarantees college tuition coverage to low- and middle-income students in your geographical area, without significant merit-based requirements (for instance, limiting your program to students with a 3.5 high school GPA), you likely qualify for this work. We are open to working with programs administered at individual colleges, across systems, at the state or county level, or at intermediaries.

2. When do you need to launch your program to be eligible?

We are open to working with existing programs seeking to add or enhance components or new programs seeking to incorporate success components from the beginning. Programs must launch scholarships and services for students no later than the Fall 2018 semester to be eligible.

3. Will MDRC provide funds to cover cost of implementing college promise/free college program supports? (e.g. cost of hiring student coaches)

No. Unfortunately MDRC is not able to provide any funding to programs to create or sustain new supports. We can help you determine the costs of components for future funding opportunities, however.

4. If a state has multiple promise programs, should they submit one application as a group, or should each program apply individually?

We encourage programs with similar structures and goals – for instance, Promise programs in multiple cities in a state or region that are administered separately but structured in the same way – to submit an application together and plan to work together throughout the process. If by contrast a state has programs that are extremely different and want to do different things, they may not want to submit together.

5. Am I eligible as just one college that serves students who are part of a statewide Promise program?

Yes, colleges serving Promise students are eligible to participate. We encourage you to share your interest with the state program staff so they are aware of what you are doing.

6. If my program supports students going to multiple colleges, will you choose one college to work with or will you work with all?

It depends on the structure of your program. Our goal would be to work with all the colleges where a preponderance of students attend. For state-wide programs serving all the colleges in a state, you may find that only some colleges want to participate.

7. Can you tell me more about behavioral science?

Traditional economic theory assumes that people are perfectly able to access and process relevant information to make “rational” decisions and express what they want. In reality, countless factors make the decision-making process a lot messier and harder to predict. Behavioral science explores the biases that we as humans are prone to in order to better understand our “irrational” decisions and behavior. Too often, programs and policies don’t reflect the way people think and behave, and research shows that even small hassles create barriers that prevent those in need of services from receiving them. Behavioral science can be used to improve program messaging, help students be more knowledgeable and compliant with requirements, and make sure programs are meeting students where they are.

8. Are there other case studies beyond Detroit Promise that MDRC has published?

The Promise Success Initiative is based on MDRC’s [15 years](#) of experience and research in postsecondary education. This work pulls on a wide variety of rigorous studies MDRC has conducted in postsecondary institutions and allows us to draw on lessons from financial aid, developmental education, student supports, and other research. [Detroit Promise](#) is our first Promise partner. We hope to generate more publications relevant to the field as part of the current initiative.

9. Does MDRC have tools or informational sheets to share about things like FAFSA completion?

We do not currently have such resources available, but we will share documents that other Promise programs might adapt as part of this work. In the meantime, we encourage you to review the tools made available by the [College Promise Campaign](#).

10. Is this the first time technical assistance has been offered? Will it be offered in future years?

MDRC has a decades-long history of providing technical assistance to help strengthen social programs. The Promise Success Initiative is the first round of technical assistance offered to college promise/free college programs. We hope to be able to provide these services to additional programs in the future.