



January 2022

## About Oakland Promise

Oakland Promise is available to young learners and their families who reside in Oakland. We offer every child the financial resources, support, mentorship, and incentives they need from birth and throughout their school years, to empower them to seek out and thrive in higher education and a career of their choosing. Through programs targeted at each stage of a young person's development, we offer College Savings Accounts, Oakland Promise Scholarships, guidance for students and parents, and other critical resources to encourage students to develop their college and vocational bound identity and persistence.

## What are the Vision, Mission and Unity Principles of Oakland Promise?

**Our Vision:** A thriving Oakland community without educational barriers to opportunity.

**Our Mission:** Engaging the Oakland community to advance equity and economic mobility through cradle-to-college and career achievement.

### Unity Principles

**Transparency:** We will be open and honest about what we do, how we do it, and why we do it.

**Accountability:** We speak up when we make mistakes and constantly reflect on the impact of our work.

**Equity:** Our programs are inclusive and targeted to support and provide access to opportunities for students, families, partners, and community members that are historically underserved and marginalized.

**Community:** We exist to benefit the Oakland community and our success depends on its trust and partnership. We are intentional in listening and responding to community needs and expertise.

**Joy:** We recognize, honor, and celebrate the resilience and brilliance of our students, families, and community.

**Integrity:** We do right by our Oakland families and scholars, our educators and volunteer community, and our Promise.

## What is the specific role of Oakland Promise?

To achieve our mission, we engage in **1) direct action, 2) serve as an intermediary, and 3) as a policy influencer**. And here are our four areas Oakland Promise intends to influence (also known as ‘throughlines’):

- **College Affordability:** We strive to make college and career technical education (CTE) affordable for families through scholarships, college savings accounts, and higher education tuition policy and partnerships.
- **College-bound Identity and Persistence:** We support students to and through post-secondary education by providing resources, mentoring, guidance, expectations, college-mindset culture and community.
- **Families’ Engagement in Children’s Education:** We share information, expectations, resources, and financial guidance with parents and caregivers so that they feel confident in supporting their students to make college or career technical education a reality.
- **Financial Capability:** We provide guidance and advisory support to help families plan for the financial commitments needed for post-secondary education completion.

Oakland Promise includes among its program components, a set of strategies designed to help families build and acquire financial resources over time to pay for college and Career Technical Education. Three primary goals drive this element of the Oakland Promise programming:

**1) To develop a college-bound identity among our students.** Research shows that low- and moderate-income children who have money set aside for their college education are more likely to attend and complete college. Having funds for college at an early age helps children think of themselves as someone who will attend college, and may positively influence academic performance due to changed expectations;<sup>1</sup>

**2) To provide scholarship money to help pay for college or career technical education (CTE).** While most low- and moderate-income students will secure public financial aid, such as Cal Grants A, B or C, through their FAFSA or DreamAct application to help fund their education, college savings accounts, and scholarship funds are a critical part of every student’s funding package; and

**3) To provide financial education for families and college-going programming for students,** equipping them with the resources needed to navigate post-secondary education and institutions, beginning at birth.

---

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, Jung, and Friedline, (2010; 2011)

## Other Roles of Oakland Promise

Since launching in 2016, Oakland Promise has proven its ability to inspire local, regional, and national efforts to more effectively support students and families.

- Founding Member of the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC)
- Founding Member of #OaklandUndivided
- Founding Cohort of Harvard's By All Means Initiative
- Member of National League of Cities
- Partnership with Blue Meridian Partners (Place Matters) and Harlem Children's Zone (Covid-19 relief)

## How does Oakland Promise operate?

As a 501c3 nonprofit, Oakland Promise operates as a public private partnership with partners and many stakeholders including OUSD and charter schools, City of Oakland, corporations, community based organizations (CBOs), nonprofits, donors, students and families to provide our programs and services. We have four main program areas that serve different age groups including babies with their parents/guardians (Brilliant Baby); elementary and middle school students (K2C); high school students (College Access); and college students and college/CTE graduates (College Completion).

Oakland Promise is led by a CEO and a Management Team of department directors. The CEO is accountable to an independent Board of Directors led by its President Michael McAfee (CEO and President at PolicyLink). The Board is composed of a diverse Executive Committee and other members who are leaders in their fields and provide valuable guidance.

Oakland Promise is supported by public and private funding.

### Board Members:

Rosaura M. Altamirano, *Oakland Promise Parent Community Ambassador*  
Chuyi Fang, *College Student, UC Davis*  
Barb Fremder, *East Bay College Fund, Founder*  
Mark Friedman, *East Bay Community Foundation, Board Chair*  
Seth Hamalian, Treasurer\*, *Mission Bay Development Group, Managing Principal*  
James Harrison, Secretary\*, *Remcho Johansen & Purcell, Partner*  
Colin Lacon, *Kaiser Permanente East Bay, Director of Public Affairs*  
Dr. Michael McAfee, President\*, *PolicyLink, CEO, Board President*  
Leroy Morishita, *California State University East Bay, President (Ret.)*  
Tomiquia Moss\*, *All-Home, Founder/Chief Executive*  
Maria Pirner, *Oakland Unified School District, Teacher, Elementary*  
Susie Poncelet, *Former East Bay College Fund Board Secretary*  
Robert Stark, *SpencerStuart, Partner*  
Susan Stutzman\*, *Board Vice President\*, Former EBCF Board President*  
Riaz Taplin, *Riaz Inc., Founder*

\* Executive Board member

**Ex-Officio non-voting board members:**

Andy Fremder, *East Bay College Fund, Founder*

Joel Mackey, *Bay Area Community Resources, Associate Professional Clinical Counselor and Attorney at Law in Private Practice*

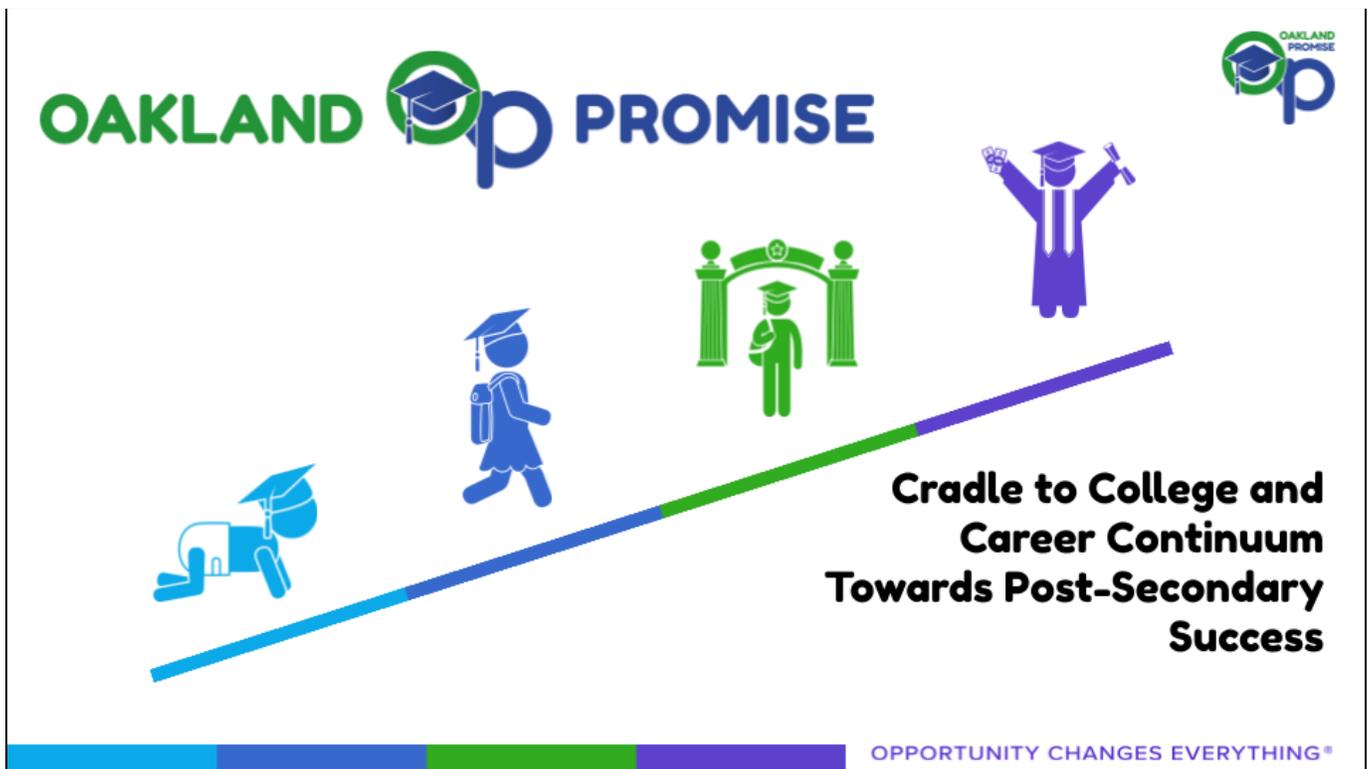
Libby Schaaf, *City of Oakland, Mayor*

David Silver, *Oakland Mayor's Office, Director of Education*

Kyla Johnson Trammell, *Oakland Unified School District, Superintendent*

**What Are the Programs Providing Support in the Cradle to College and Career Continuum?**

Our program areas reach and serve every age group. Through our cradle-to-college and career programs at each stage of a young person's development, Oakland Promise (OP) offers seeded college savings accounts (529 CSAs), scholarships for the Oakland district and public charter school students, financial resources, college-going culture programming, mentorship and advising to support students to attain their college and career dreams.





## Brilliant Baby

The Brilliant Baby program supports children's early healthy development and school readiness. In Brilliant Baby, an income-eligible family can set up an OP College Savings Account for their baby before the child's first birthday, funded with \$500 from Oakland Promise to start. Additionally, as part of the program, the baby's caregivers can receive:

- a) Financial coaching to help caregivers set and pursue their financial goals for their family
- b) Family Leadership Group resources for early learning and child development
- c) Opportunities to build a community of support with other families

### **IMPACT | Over 1,000 Brilliant Babies have enrolled in OP**

- Early findings from a randomized control trial demonstrated that parents enrolled in Brilliant Baby had increased hope for the future, increased expectations for their child's' educational attainment, lowered stress and increased family income.
- Nearly 80% of parents participate in coaching and 86% say that "BB has positively influenced the way I think about my child's future."



## Kindergarten to College (K2C)

OP's K2C helps each elementary and middle school student in Oakland think of themselves as a college bound individual. From Kindergarten through the 8th grade in district and charter schools, the child and family receive support from our Kindergarten to College (K2C) program which provides:

- a) The Oakland Promise Scholarship, which allows students to gain up to \$500 when they graduate and attend a college or career education program; all Oakland public school Kindergarteners are awarded the first \$100.
- b) An opportunity to also earn a one-time \$75 incentive for opening a family owned College Savings Account for any TK-8th grade family
- c) College and career workshops for families and students
- d) High school readiness programming with middle school students

### **IMPACT | 30,000 Oakland Public school students have about \$3M in an OP scholarship for college**

- Oakland Promise Scholarship launched late July 2021 with more than 375 scholarship accounts activated to-date
- Over 630 families have opened a family-owned college-savings account, in which Oakland Promise has awarded \$20K in initial deposits and families have collectively contributed more than \$595K
- 60+ Elementary and Middle Schools receive targeted support focused on creating a college-bound identity within students, preparing students to be high school ready, and providing post-secondary information to families
- About 7,000 educational enrichment kits distributed to Kindergartners across Oakland since March 2021



## College Access

Our vision is for all high school students in Oakland district and public charter schools to have access and support to set them apart on a path to college and career success. We want to dramatically increase the number of college graduates for Oakland public schools. When the student reaches high school, they will receive support from our College Access team which provides:

- a) Application support for College application and financial aid
- b) Resources for financial aid and guidance on college and career readiness including 2-year, 4-year, and Career Technical Education options.
- c) Opportunities for further funding from our Oakland Promise Scholarship. Scholarships range from \$2,000 to \$4000 for those graduating in the Spring of 2022
- d) And additional higher value scholarships \$8,000 - \$16,000 are also possible through a competitive process.

### **IMPACT | A record 750 Oakland students applied for Oakland Promise scholarships from the HS Class of 2021.**

- Over \$2.2 million in 2-year, 4-year and Career Technical Education scholarships were awarded to 514 graduating students compared to 398 scholarships granted in 2020.
- Over 67% and 83% of all scholarship recipients were Black / Latinx and first-generation college students respectively.



## College Completion

Lastly when in college, OP scholars will receive support from the College Completion team which provides:

- a) Scholarship distribution
- b) Guidance and mentorship for the student to persevere through a postsecondary program
- c) Resources, events, internships and workshops to help students plan for their postsecondary plans.

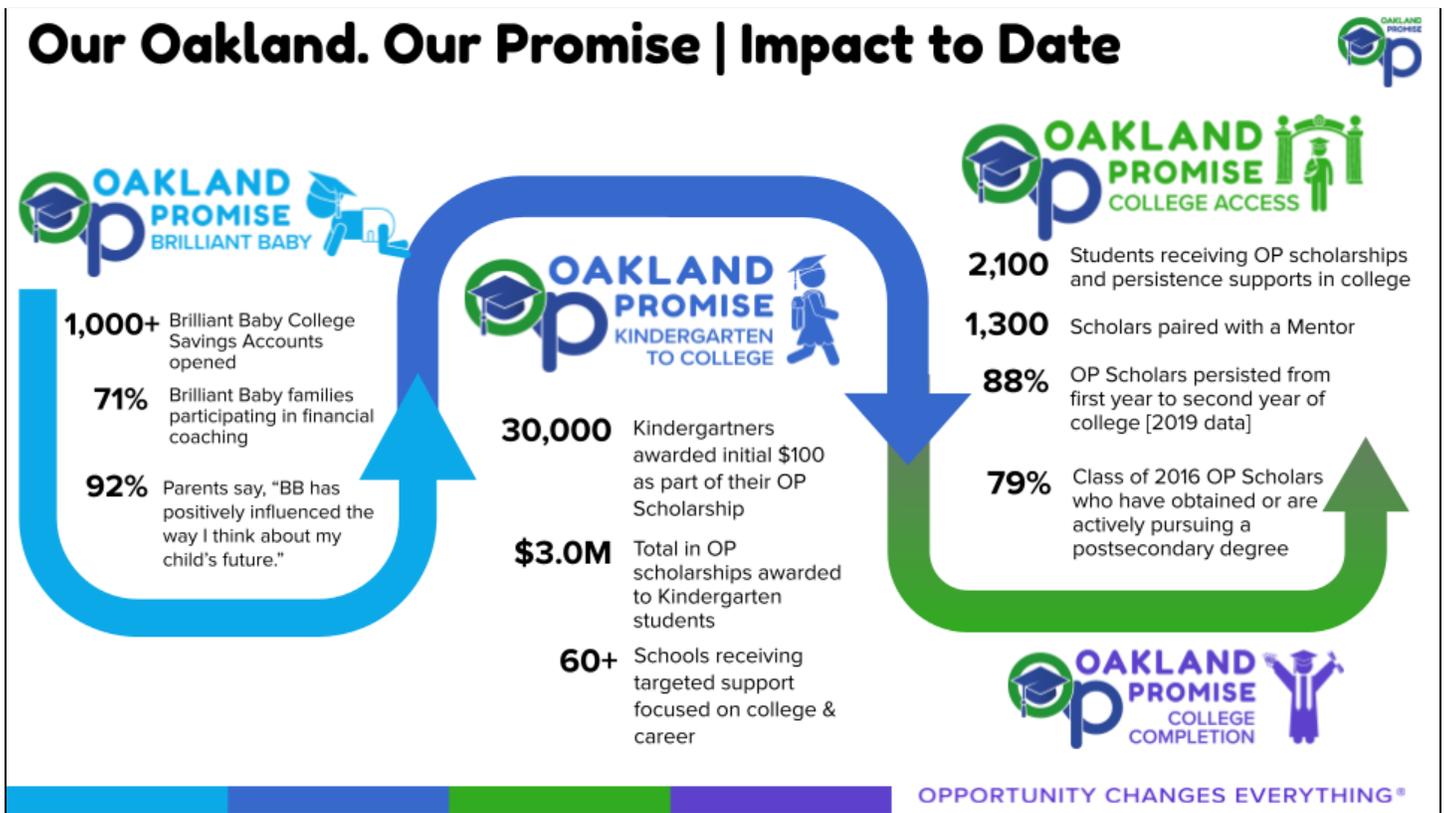
### **IMPACT | Oakland Promise students are persisting and completing postsecondary education at rates higher than comparable peers.**

- College Persistence rates in the US (72.4%-73.9%), in California (68.9%-72.5%) have not changed much between 2012 and 2017. Oakland Promise scholars from the 2016-2018 cohorts persist at 88%, which is higher than Oakland-wide, state and national trends.
- 79% of the first cohort of 300 (Class of 2016) have either completed their degree or are still pursuing their degree in their sixth year since entering a postsecondary program.

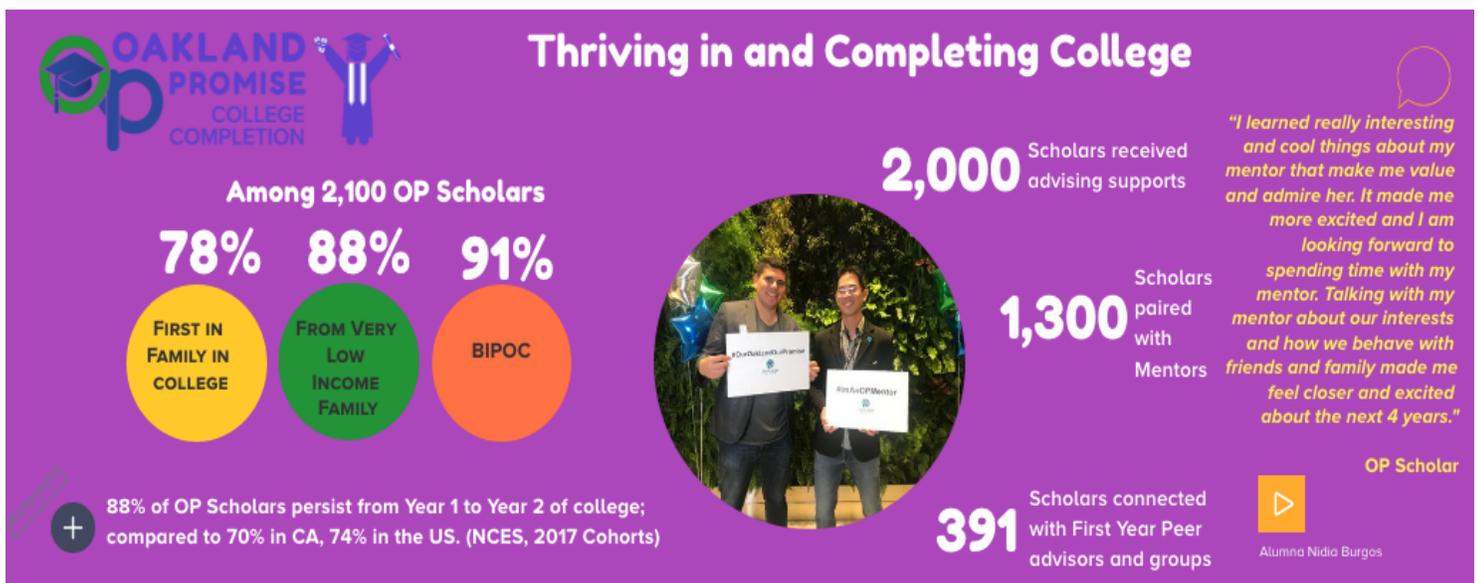
*Comparison:* For the Class of 2013, national completion rates for high minority/low income students was **28%**.

---

# What is the Progress to Date?



Since 2016, nearly \$17 million have been awarded to 2,100 students who have received scholarships and postsecondary supports.



## What is OP's Generation Fund?

The Generation Fund is a \$50M quasi-endowment that supports financial awards directly to Oakland students and families for the next 25 years.

In 2019, Oakland Promise launched the Generation Fund, a quasi-endowment with the purpose of providing scholarships to over 25 years to graduating Oakland high school students for their post-secondary educational pursuits. The Generation Fund enables Oakland Promise to provide scholarships to three generations of Oakland scholars, leveraging public funding students are eligible for such as the Pell and Cal Grants for their education with the Oakland Promise scholarships they receive. While we serve all students in Oakland, we invest more dollars in students historically excluded from postsecondary education. As of January 2022, about \$49.3 million have been raised towards the goal of \$50 million.

- Every Medi-Cal eligible baby born in Oakland (~2,000) will be eligible to receive a 529 college savings account seeded with \$500.
- All students attending Oakland Public schools “earn” money in an Oakland Promise college scholarship starting in Kindergarten that will be added to and can appreciate over time - resulting in a maximum scholarship of up to \$4,000 paired with persistence support in college.

# APPENDIX

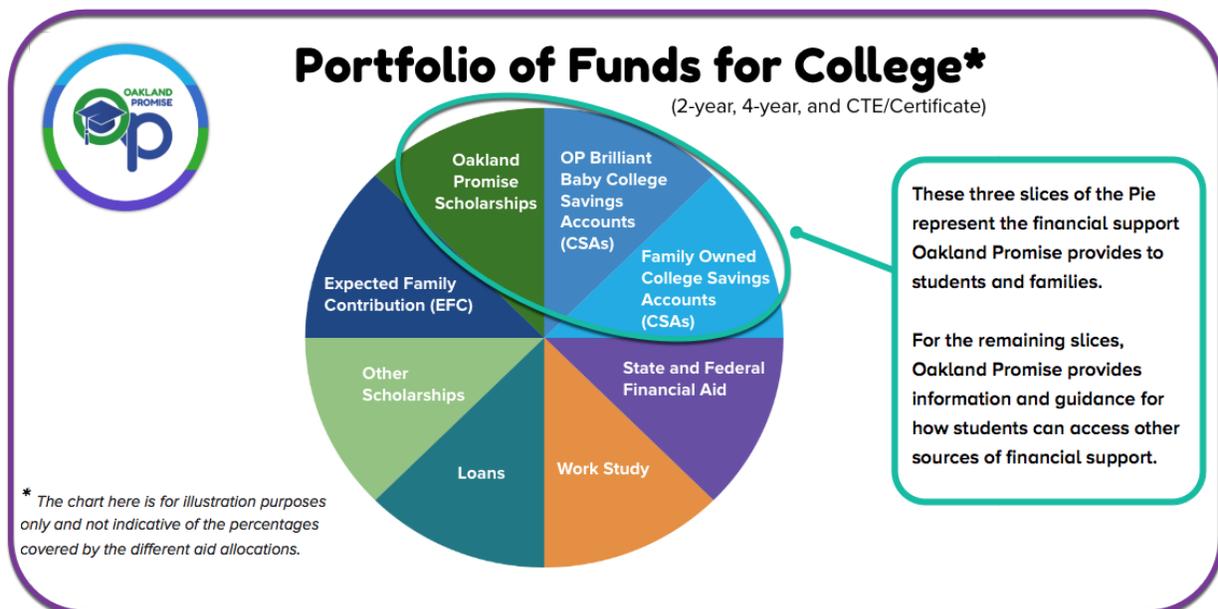
## When did Oakland Promise become a 501c3 nonprofit?

- 2003: “East Bay College Fund” (EBCF) was founded as an independent 501c3 nonprofit with the mission of serving high school and college students in Oakland.
- 2016: “The Oakland Promise” was launched in the Mayor’s Office as a fiscally-sponsored project of the Oakland Public Education Fund (a 501c3 nonprofit). *The Oakland Promise* Initiative worked with many partner organizations and entities during this time, including the EBCF.
- 2019: The Oakland Promise initiative and EBCF decide to formally join efforts, with the name “Oakland Promise”. (The “The” is dropped.) EBCF amended its Articles of Incorporation to change its name to “*Oakland Promise*” and expand its mission while keeping its Federal EIN number (for the IRS). The Oakland Promise initiative exited the fiscal sponsorship of Oakland Public Education Fund. This was the “merger” and the newly-merged entity, titled “Oakland Promise” continued to be an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization.

## What is the composition of overall funds a student can receive for college and what is the part that Oakland Promise contributes?

Besides providing scholarships and 529 College Savings Accounts, OP also provides support to families and students to help them access external opportunities including State and Federal Financial Aid, Other Scholarships, and Family-Owned College Savings Accounts (CSAs).

Oakland Promise helps students and families build a portfolio of funds from a variety of sources to help pay for college. Below is a graphic illustration of this portfolio approach. It is important to note that Oakland Promise Scholarships and 529 College Savings Plans are just two strategies among many for paying for post-secondary education.



## What do those categories on the pie chart mean?

- **Oakland Promise Scholarships:** Need-based and merit-based OP scholarships, including OP Scholarships for Oakland public school kindergartners seeded with \$100 from City Council (formerly known as the Early College Scholarship Funds).
- **OP Brilliant Baby College Savings Accounts (CSAs):** OP Brilliant Baby Scholarship 529 Plan seeded with \$500 for income-eligible infants in Oakland Promise Brilliant Baby Program.
- **Family-Owned College Savings Accounts (CSAs):** Family-Owned 529 College Savings Accounts opened through the BB or K2C\* Programs (\*K2C Families receive \$75 in savings incentives).
- **State and Federal Financial Aid:** Includes FAFSA, Pell Grants, Dream Act App, EOPS, and others.
- **Work Study:** Federal programs providing part-time jobs for students to help pay for their education.
- **Loans:** Loans are typically through federal or private lenders, only as needed.
- **Other Scholarships:** Merit-based OP “Great Expectations”, other private scholarships, or institutional scholarships.
- **EFC:** Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is any form of financial support from a parent or guardian.

## What is the background of Oakland Promise and East Bay College Fund (EBCF) merger, and Oakland Promise’s nonprofit status?

The Oakland Promise Initiative, developed and incubated in the Mayor’s office, was launched as a fiscally-sponsored project of the Oakland Public Education Fund, a 501c3 nonprofit. Since its inception, Oakland Promise has worked in partnership with several organizations in pursuing its mission. This included the East Bay College Fund (a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 2003) which offered scholarships and college persistence services to Oakland students.

In 2019, the East Bay College Fund and The Oakland Promise initiative decided to fully combine forces and formalize the long-standing partnership by “merging” into a single organization. This was not a merger of two nonprofits and therefore did not require a Certificate of Merger. The specifics of this are as follows:

- East Bay College Fund, as a 501(c)(3), underwent a name conversion to Oakland Promise, via amendment to its Articles of Incorporation filed and approved by the California Secretary of State on June 27, 2019, and subsequently acknowledged by the Internal Revenue Service and the CA State Registry of Charitable Trusts.
- Oakland Promise formally exited as a fiscally-sponsored project of the Oakland Public Education Fund. All of the assets of that entity were transferred to the re-named 501(c)(3). Oakland Public Ed Fund, at the request of the project, completed an independent audit of the project, with no findings reported, and the entity was fully exited and effectively transferred to East Bay College Fund, newly renamed as Oakland Promise.

- Thus, when East Bay College Fund and Oakland Promise joined forces to become a single organization under the name “Oakland Promise” there was only one, already existing, 501(c)(3) nonprofit and only one Federal Tax ID (#54-2103707), that of the former East Bay College Fund, now under the name of Oakland Promise. As there was no creation of a new 501(c)(3), there was no need for the IRS to issue a tax-exempt determination letter.
- As is common practice when organizations complete a name change, East Bay College Fund filed a D.B.A or “doing business as” (also known as a fictitious business name statement) with Alameda County Clerk. During this name-change transition, Oakland Promise was sometimes listed, and officially on our City of Oakland Business Tax Certificate, as “East Bay College Fund dba Oakland Promise,” or, “Oakland Promise formerly known as East Bay College Fund” for ease of understanding to those unfamiliar with the joining of forces between the entities.
- Now, two years after our joining of forces, we are known simply as Oakland Promise, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefit corporation registered with the CA State Registry of Charitable Trust in good standing with both the Federal IRS and the California Department of Justice.

We would like to mention that there is no legal requirement for a “letter of merger” as that is only necessary when two 501(c)(3) organizations merge into a single 501(c)(3) organization. As stated above, East Bay College Fund was a nonprofit, and Oakland Promise was a fiscally-sponsored project of the Oakland Public Ed Fund (a nonprofit). However, there is documentation of Oakland Promise exiting the fiscal sponsorship of Oakland Public Ed Fund, as well as an amended Articles of Incorporation for East Bay College Fund that states East Bay College Fund expanded its mission and changed its name to Oakland Promise.

## What have been the results of financial audits?

Oakland Promise has completed four audits over the past 2 years out of an abundance of commitment to ensure accurate, transparent, and proper financial reporting to assure the public of the appropriate management and stewardship of the donated funds from public and philanthropic resources received:

- Oakland Public Education Fund & Oakland Promise Agreed-Upon Procedures completed upon exit and termination of fiscal sponsorship (*audit performed independently by Moss Adams*) linked [here](#) and also included in the Appendix.
  - Report of Independent Accountants on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures for the Periods of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, and July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019
- East Bay College Fund Financial Statement Audit linked [here](#).
  - (*Audit performed independently by Novogradac & Company LLP*)
  - Financial Statements with Independent Auditor’s Report for the year ended December 31, 2018 and six month shortened fiscal year ended June 30, 2019
- Oakland Promise Correspondence Audit performed by the Office of the Attorney General in August 2020 with no request for additional information and no additional action taken.

- Oakland Promise Financial Statement Audit (*currently in process*)
  - (*Audit performed independently by Novogradac & Company LLP*)
  - Financial Statements with Independent Auditor's Report for the year ended June 30, 2020

### **What is the management of City of Oakland funds for students' future college expenses in the Oakland Promise Scholarships (formerly known as the Early College Scholarship)?**

Between 2016 and 2021, Oakland Promise was awarded \$2.15 million from the City of Oakland designated as initial \$100 deposits into kindergartener's Oakland Promise Scholarship accounts. The City of Oakland recently renewed their commitment to support \$100 deposits into Oakland public school kindergartener's Oakland Promise Scholarship accounts for 2021 and 2022. As such, the Governing Board of the Oakland Promise holds legal fiduciary responsibility for these and all other funds granted to the organization. In the unlikely event that Oakland Promise as an organization should cease to exist before these college funds are spent on eligible student's post-secondary educations, a successor organization would be identified by the Oakland Promise Governing Board to which the assets and responsibility would be transferred to complete this payout process.

One hundred percent of City of Oakland funds designated for Oakland Promise Scholarships will be paid out to students for post secondary educational expenses. Unclaimed scholarship funds will be re-allocated to other Oakland public school students. The City of Oakland funds are committed to Kindergarten cohorts beginning in 2017-2018 and Oakland Promise will continue to administer these scholarships for kindergarteners on behalf of the City of Oakland with each grant distribution, in order to provide for future kindergarten cohorts.

Please note that all funds were held in the San Francisco Foundation (SFF) which is an agency fund that Oakland Promise opened to manage our assets. Funds in that account accumulated capital appreciation and interest income over a period of time and as such, those gains will also be distributed to the Oakland Promise Scholarship accounts.