



Application to the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust

Providence Promise (PVD Promise) is a parent-driven partnership that is actively transforming post-secondary access for Providence youth. PVD Promise partners with families, education institutions, community organizations, and public and private entities to achieve its mission.

Mission

PVD Promise promotes high educational aspirations and more equitable opportunities for Providence Public and Charter School students by advocating for college savings and family engagement, increasing financial literacy, and reducing the financial burden of higher education.

Vision

To increase the K-12 and postsecondary success of Providence Public and Charter School students and to support a brighter future for students, their families, and the community.

The Challenge

Consistent, national research shows that there is a demonstrated need for college savings programs among low to moderate income communities. Low-income youth with \$500 in a College Savings Account (CSA) are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate than youth without; yet, traditional CSA programs remain largely inaccessible. In fact, “less than 1% of families with household incomes under \$75K currently save in 529s or similar savings vehicles” (CommonWealth). Other benefits of CSAs include increased student and parent educational expectations, K-12 outcomes, early social-emotional development and child and maternal mental health, among many others.

Overview

Believing that all children are deserving of high-quality educational experiences, PVD Promise leverages a multi-prong approach to mitigate barriers to access for participants, a majority of whom are from historically underserved populations:

- **partnering with families to establish a strong, financial foundation for higher education.** PVD Promise supports parents/guardians to open 529 CSAs for their children. Bilingual staff cultivate trusting relationships with families, helping them navigate common barriers to accessing traditional CSAs. Families commit to making monthly CSA contributions within their means, about 1% of their income.
- **supporting families with asset-building.** PVD Promise provides a \$100 seed deposit to each new CSA. Additionally, students and their parents can earn up to \$250 per CSA each month

through an expansive incentive structure; PVD Promise incentivizes hundreds of behaviors and activities that support program participants' present and future success, such as participating in financial empowerment programming or completing an SAT preparatory course.

- **engaging students and their families in holistic family wrap-around services.** PVD Promise offers robust, multi-disciplinary, and bilingual programs and engagement opportunities for participants that complement the financial foundation they are building. Programming is community-responsive, as member-led councils inform program topics and support facilitation. Furthermore, a number of students and parents/guardians serve on the Board of Directors.

PVD Promise's approach is guided by local, regional, and national data, as well as member feedback. Currently, nearly 1,300 students collectively hold \$2.35M in college savings. In FYE 24 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024), PVD Promise facilitated 111 unique workshops, events and meetings (one-third with community partners) for over 2,300 participants and provided \$305,385 in incentive awards directly to students' CSAs. Additionally, the Youth Mentorship Program facilitated hundreds of one-on-one's, culminating in more than 1,000 mentorship hours provided by PVD Promise during that time period.

Recent Progress

PVD Promise received \$25,000 from the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust on 7/9/24. Since then, PVD Promise has achieved exciting growth in its scope of services and organizational impact. In addition to the services described above, PVD Promise has also:

- expanded its youth services to support middle and high school students to and through post-secondary, including growing its Youth Mentorship Program from 35 to 40 mentor/mentee pairs, hosting a very successful, first Youth Career Summit, and implementing a new Alumni Program that offers robust support to current college students as they persist in their programs.
- increased case management significantly by meeting with over 40 families individually each month to navigate challenges with their CSAs, help them get more involved in programming, or support them with any difficulties they may be facing. PVD Promise also provides recommendations to families of local partners, resources, and content-experts when relevant.
- hosted its largest Multicultural Night yet for over 200 students, parents/guardians, and family members. Attendees enjoyed a variety of food, activities, decorations, and entertainment representing the many cultures present across enrolled families.
- conducted extensive strategic planning to help inform how PVD Promise will support even more Providence students and families in the future.
- continued to support nearly 1,300 students from 700 Providence families through our very intentional, community-responsive, and holistic means of support.

The Request

PVD Promise has received support from the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust for the past seven, consecutive fiscal years. During the last three fiscal years, PVD Promise has been generously awarded \$25,000 for general operating expenses. PVD Promise humbly requests a renewal of support from the Hinkling Bradford Trust for \$25,000 to support general operating in FYE 25 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025). Areas of support include the following:

- Enrollment and outreach efforts

- Family and youth engagement activities
- Financial literacy training for students and families
- The Early Scholarship (incentive) Program

These activities are aligned to our current strategic plan. By June 30, 2025, PVD Promise aims to have 1,300 students enrolled with over \$2.5M in cumulative college savings, a significant portion having been awarded by PVD Promise via our Early Scholarship (incentive) Program. In fact, PVD Promise has provided nearly \$1,000,000 directly to students' CSAs since 2020.

PVD Promise is an excellent fit for the Edward Hinkling Bradford Trust. PVD Promise is perfectly aligned with the Trust's goal to help Providence Public School students pursue a college diploma. The Bradford Trust details that scholarships will be granted to students, "without reference to excellence in scholarship, but rather preferring those unable to obtain other aid; considering only diligence in the pursuit of education as manifested by regularity of attendance at school exercises, punctuality, cooperation with teachers, aid to indigent parents, work outside school hours, and willingness to make personal sacrifices; the said gift to be known as the Edward Hinkling Bradford Fund for the relief of poor children." PVD Promise is open to all Providence Public School students and works with families and students to save for and plan for the future. Our services include supplemental learning programs and a robust Early Scholarship program, which provides up to \$250 per student/month in incentive awards to students' CSAs for both in-school and out-of-school activities that support current K-12 outcomes and future college and career success. Given this, a renewal and increase of funding will meaningfully support our ability to continue to support the post-secondary education of Providence Public School students, as the Trust suggests.

Demographics

Enrolled families of PVD Promise are a diverse group of multicultural, and multilingual families from across the city. Currently, there are nearly 1,300 students from 700 families enrolled in PVD Promise. Our participants, who range in age from birth to high school seniors, include:

- 97% students of color
- 76% identify as Latinx
- 48% male students
- 52% female students
- 90% students from low-income households*
- 50% of students at or under the age of 10
- 71% of students will be first generation college graduates
- 20% of students will be first generation high school graduates

**low-income defined as households earning under \$60,000 per year (AMI)*

In addition to students, we serve more than 1,200 family members whose demographics closely reflect that of enrolled students, but skew more heavily female.

Organizational Commitment to Racial and Cultural Equity:

At its core, PVD Promise works to thoughtfully and intentionally break down barriers to high educational opportunities for historically underrepresented identities and promote pathways for families to access and engage in programming. High quality, bilingual, and culturally relevant programs are facilitated weekly both virtually and in-person at accessible locations. PVD Promise collaborates with member-led Parent and Youth Councils, intentional feedback channels created to center community voice and ensure that programming community needs and interest-aligned. Councils support Staff to set program topics, create meeting agendas, and give feedback on the structure and operations of programming.

PVD Promise Staff and Board of Directors reflect the demographics of the Providence community we serve. Staff is 86% female, 57% BIPOC and 57% multilingual. Our Board is 50% female and 57% BIPOC, and includes a Spanish-only speaker. A number of students and parents serve on our Board of Directors, informing our organizational strategy. Spanish interpretation is provided at all Board and Council meetings, and all materials are presented in both English and Spanish. PVD Promise maintains a diverse Staff and Board by creating robust candidate pools that are at least two-thirds BIPOC and by seeking out candidates who emulate the values of the organization.

Evaluation

PVD Promise measures and monitors its success using a number of robust data evaluation systems. First, PVD Promise captures demographic information in its internal database using parent/guardian reported data. As of March 2024, PVD Promise is working with the Providence Public School District (PPSD) to use district data to verify parent/guardian reported demographic information, as well as information on student attendance and school performance for PVD Promise students attending a PPSD school. In addition to demographic and student-level data, PVD Promise also measures:

- The number of unique and cumulative program participants and their level of engagement;
- College savings and related behaviors of participating families on a quarterly basis;
- Qualitative feedback via surveys and focus groups; and,
- Progress to goals outlined in a three-year Strategic Plan.

Significantly, PVD Promise focuses on early enrollment to help students develop both a foundation for financing higher education and a college-going mindset from a young age. As the organization and its participants age, large cohorts of enrolled students are graduating from high school. In fact, nearly 250 enrolled students are expected to graduate from high school in the next 3 years. As a result, PVD Promise has fortified its system to record the postsecondary intentions of these graduates now and in the future.

Finally, PVD Promise has partnered with Brown University to evaluate the organization's impact on enrolled families in key areas, including financial behaviors, expectations for higher education, and student-level behavior, compared to non-enrolled families. Preliminary information will be available in FYE 25. In the future, PVD Promise will also coordinate with researchers at Brown University and PPSD to track key indicators of participating students over time.

Testimonials

An important measure of success for PVD Promise is the testimonials received from students, parents/guardians and partners about the impact of our programming on the community. A few testimonials from PVD Promise members and partners are included below.

“When I hear PVD Promise, I hear opportunity, I hear access, I hear less stress” - Parent

“Since I signed both of my children up for Providence Promise I have become part of a solid, extraordinary foundation which provides so much self confidence, leadership and guided support throughout and to the completion of college”. - Parent

“Providence Promise has helped me feel more comfortable for what I want to do in the future and has helped me better understand how I’m going to achieve my goals.” - Student

“Providence Promise supports families in their efforts to plan and save for higher education for their children. This intentional planning, and their program of savings incentives, is a model that is grounded in an understanding of the importance of family engagement as the foundation for healthy development and academic success. Our collaboration has allowed for mutual growth in our respective client bases, deepened our collective impact on the community and supported our shared goals of engaging children and families in learning and enrichment experiences that support success in school and in life.” - Providence Public Library