

## Early commitment programs (for middle and high school students) Higher Education

Literature review updated December 2016.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

**Program Description:** Early commitment programs offer assured college financial assistance early in students' academic careers, conditional on meeting certain program requirements. We focus on programs where students were assured assistance by the 10th grade, and the program requirements were low enough that students would be reasonably certain that they would be able to receive aid. We distinguish these programs from merit programs by excluding programs with a test score requirement and/or a minimum GPA requirement of 3.0 or higher. The programs included in the meta-analysis cover up to 100% of college tuition and fees at eligible colleges and universities for four years, conditional on meeting initial scholarship requirements and continued satisfactory academic performance in college. One program included in the meta-analysis also provided academic (tutoring/counseling) and college application support in high school.

### Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Graduate with 4-year degree	2	2764	0.070	0.067	23	0.149	0.236
Enroll in 4-year college	3	16386	0.106	0.058	18	0.200	0.062
Enroll in 2-year college	2	12841	0.013	0.020	18	0.025	0.208
Graduate with 2-year degree	1	855	0.029	0.047	21	0.056	0.669
Persistence into 4th year	1	855	-0.060	0.047	22	-0.114	0.043
High school graduation	2	100991	0.108	0.114	18	0.082	0.548
Crime	1	45393	-0.010	0.007	18	0.010	0.179
Grade point average	1	88374	-0.015	0.004	18	-0.015	0.001

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

## Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

- Ash, J.W. (2015). *A promise kept in El Dorado? An evaluation of the impact of a universal, place based college scholarship on K-12 achievement and high school graduation*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas).
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- Goldhaber, D., Long, M., Gratz, T., & Rooklyn, J. (2017). *The effects of Washington's College Bound Scholarship Program on high school grades, high school completion, and incarceration*. CEDR Working Paper No. 05302017-2-1. University of Washington, Seattle, WA.
- St. John, E.P., Gross, J.P.K., Musoba, G.D., & Chung, A.S. (2005). *A step toward college success: Assessing attainment among Indiana's Twenty-First Century Scholars*. Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation for Education.
- Toutkoushian, R.K., Hossler, D., Desjardins, S.L., McCall, B.P., & Canche, M.G. (2015). The effect of participating in Indiana's Twenty-First Century Scholars program on college enrollments. *Review of Higher Education*, 39(1), 59-95.

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