

# Rhode Island Promise Policy Manual

Community College of Rhode Island



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## **I. Rhode Island Promise Overview**

In August 2017, the State of Rhode Island created the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship (RI Promise) program. The three purposes of the RI Promise legislation are:

- 1) To encourage more young people to develop their talents through higher education;
- 2) To improve the Rhode Island economy by increasing the education and skills levels of the Rhode Island workforce;
- 3) To ensure the future prosperity of the state by extending the opportunity to receive a free public education beyond high school and into college.

Through the RI Promise program, eligible students are able to attend the Community College of Rhode Island for up to two years free of tuition and mandatory student fees. The RI Promise legislation is subject to renewal, revision, and/or amendment following its expiration in 2020.

Under the legislation creating the program, the [Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner \(OPC\)](#) is responsible for crafting Policies and Procedures that govern RI Promise. OPC issued the [Policies and Procedures policy document](#) on October 10, 2017 with the intent to "...provide guidance to college administrators, parents, and students regarding the provisions and requirements of the Rhode Island Promise scholarship program...".

The purpose of this CCRI RI Promise Policy Manual is to further clarify CCRI's interpretation of the RI Promise legislation and the OPC Policies and Procedures. This document describes the policies and processes that CCRI uses in its administration of the RI Promise program.

## **II. Benefits of RI Promise to Students**

The RI Promise program allows Rhode Island residents who meet program eligibility criteria to attend CCRI for up to two years free of tuition and mandatory fees. These are costs that every CCRI student is required to pay to enroll in classes. RI Promise funding is available to eligible students regardless of family income.

Any additional costs are not covered by RI Promise funding. Costs that are excluded from RI Promise funding are:

- 1) Textbooks;
- 2) Late registration fees;
- 3) Fees associated with particular academic programs (for example, nursing or dental fees);
- 4) Fees associated with particular courses (for example, materials fees); and,
- 5) Travel costs associated with attendance at CCRI.

RI Promise funding is applied after all other sources of federal aid (e.g. Pell grants, Supplementary Educational Opportunity Grants, etc.), scholarships, and any additional financial aid funding are applied to the student's cost of attendance. For purposes of RI Promise, available student loans are not considered as part of the student's financial aid award. CCRI encourages students to consider RI Promise funding before pursuing student loans.

RI Promise funding may be used cover tuition and mandatory costs associated with enrollment during fall and spring semesters. RI Promise does not cover tuition and fees associated with CCRI summer session courses. CCRI may offer summer scholarships to students who wish to enroll in summer courses. Summer scholarships are subject to availability of funding. CCRI encourages RI Promise students to take 15 credits during each fall and spring semester to avoid potential lack of scholarship support for summer courses.

## **III. Academic Program Requirements**

RI Promise funding may be applied to any associate degree program at CCRI. Students may use RI Promise funding to cover the cost of both developmental and college-level coursework in pursuit of their degree. RI Promise funding may not be used for certificate or non-credit academic programs available at CCRI.

## IV. RI Promise Eligibility Requirements

### A. Incoming Students

The RI Promise program is available to Rhode Island residents who meet the following criteria:

- 1) **Apply to and attend CCRI.** RI Promise covers mandatory tuition and fees for up to two years of enrollment at CCRI. More information on the CCRI application process can be found on the Office of Enrollment Services (OES) [Admissions Checklist website](#).
- 2) **In-State Residency.** Rhode Island residents who qualify for in-state tuition and fees under the [OPC Residency Policy](#);
  - a. Non-citizens may still qualify for RI Promise funding if they meet the criteria articulated in the [OPC Residency Policy](#).
  - b. US citizens and permanent residents who have been classified as non-residents for tuition based on their application to CCRI may complete the [CCRI Application for In-State Residency](#). Please contact Rob Giovino ([rgiovino@ccri.edu](mailto:rgiovino@ccri.edu)), Associate Director of Admissions, if you need assistance with this application.
  - c. Active duty members of the military, veterans, and their families may qualify for in-state tuition and fees. Individuals and families who are interested in learning more can consult the [OPC Residency Policy](#).
- 3) **Recent Graduate.** Students must have graduated from high school (public, private, or home schooled) or earned their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED, formerly known as the GED) between 2017 and 2020;
- 4) **Immediate Enrollment.** Students must be admitted to and enroll at CCRI in the semester immediately following high school graduation or receipt of a HSED/GED.
- 5) **Age Restrictions.** Students must have graduated from high school or earned their HSED/GED before reaching nineteen (19) years of age
  - a. Students who graduated from high school at ages 19, 20, or 21 may be eligible for RI Promise funding if they can provide a documented reason (e.g. started K-12 education late, repeated a grade, had an individual education plan) for late graduation.
- 6) **Full-time.** Students must be enrolled as “full-time” college students. Students must register for no fewer than 12 credits per semester. Developmental credits (for non-college level courses) may be applied toward the “full-time” requirement. CCRI strongly encourages students to pursue 15 credits per semester to be able to remain on track to complete the 30 credits per year required as part of the RI Promise program.
- 7) **Commit to Live and Work in Rhode Island.** The RI Promise program is an investment in Rhode Island residents and the state economy. RI Promise recipients must commit to live and work and/or continue their education in Rhode Island. CCRI will secure this commitment from all students who intend to receive RI Promise funding through a signed [RI Promise Application form](#) (formerly known as the Attestation of Understanding) to be submitted to CCRI.

## B. Continuing Students

The RI Promise Scholarship will automatically renew for a second year for students who meet the eligibility criteria. Returning CCRI students seeking a second year of RI Promise funding must meet the following criteria to remain eligible:

1. **File the FAFSA and submit all documentation.** Students must file the FAFSA before the federal deadline in advance of their second year of study at CCRI. Students must submit all required financial aid verification documents to the CCRI Financial Aid Office.
2. **Full-time enrollment.** Students must continue to be enrolled full-time at CCRI.
  - a. Full-time enrollment is considered 12 or more credits per semester. CCRI strongly encourages all students to take 15 credits per semester.
3. **Minimum Credits.** Students must earn a minimum of 30 credits by the end of their first year. For example, a student who completes 15 credits in his/her fall semester, 12 credits in his/her spring semester, and 3 credits in the summer semester will remain eligible for a second year of RI Promise funding.
4. **Minimum GPA.** Students must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher by the end of their first year. For example, a student who begins at CCRI in the fall semester must have a GPA of at least 2.5 by the end of the following summer.
5. **Continuous enrollment.** Students must enroll in each fall and spring semester to remain eligible for RI Promise funding.
  - a. Under extenuating circumstances, a student may request an approved leave of absence and remain eligible for RI Promise. Extenuating circumstances may include:
    - i. Documented medical emergency;
    - ii. Documented personal emergency; and/or,
    - iii. Documented military deployment or transfer.

## C. Reasons Students May Be Removed from the RI Promise Program

Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements for the RI Promise program will no longer receive funding. Students may be removed for failing to file the FAFSA, failing to enroll full-time, earning fewer than the 30 credits per year minimum, falling below the GPA minimum, and/or not enrolling in all fall and spring semesters.

## V. Exceptions to Standard Eligibility Criteria (Special Circumstances)

In some cases, students may be able to return to and/or retain RI Promise eligibility when they do not meet the criteria described in Section IV of this policy manual. Students who believe they may be eligible for the special circumstances described in this section must contact the Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@ccri.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@ccri.edu) to request an exception to policy.

### A. Exceptions to Standard Eligibility (Special Circumstances)

#### 1. Leave of Absence

RI Promise requires students to maintain continuous enrollment to completion of degree. Under certain extenuating circumstances, RI Promise students may request an approved leave to extend eligibility. Extenuating circumstances may include:

1. Documented medical emergency;
2. Documented personal emergency; and/or,
3. Documented military deployment or transfer.

As soon as possible after learning of the disruption to their educational plan, but no later than seven business days, RI Promise students should contact the dean of students at [deanofstudents@ccri.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@ccri.edu) to arrange an interview. A leave of absence may be approved for students who:

1. Meet all RI Promise requirements;
2. Present proper documentation such as;
  - a. A signed and dated note from a physician or psychologist stating the necessity of the leave inclusive of a time span;
  - b. Hospital discharge papers;
  - c. Obituary or death certificate;
  - d. Title 10 or Title 32 documents for military deployments or transfers; and/or,
  - e. Other documentation may be accepted by the deans depending on the particular circumstances of each individual case; and,
3. Be willing to develop an educational plan that will allow the student to achieve degree completion within one (1) year of the original graduation date.
  - a. Failure to adhere to the approved educational plan can result in loss of eligibility.

Leave of absences may be approved for up to one (1) year.

#### 2. Performance-based Health Science (PBHS) Academic Programs

CCRI offers several [PBHS programs](#) that require students to meet or exceed academic requirements to gain admittance to the program. In some cases, certain PBHS programs may include fewer than 12 credits per semester.

RI Promise students who are admitted to a PBHS program that includes fewer than 12 credits per semester will be eligible to retain RI Promise funding. Further, RI Promise students in qualifying PBHS programs may be exempted from the “30 credits per year” requirement of RI Promise eligibility provided the student remains on track to meet the requirements of his/her PBHS program. RI Promise students who wish to pursue a PBHS degree must meet all other eligibility criteria as outlined in Section IV.C of this policy. Regardless of PBHS status, the RI Promise program and any RI Promise funding is available to all students for a maximum of four (4) semesters per student.

### 3. Part-time Enrollment in Final Semester

RI Promise students may retain eligibility to receive Promise funding in their final semester while enrolled part-time at CCRI. Students will only be able to enroll part-time and receive Promise funding if the student requires fewer than 12 credits to complete their degree that semester. For example, should a student earn 51 credits after three semesters, that student will be able to enroll in the 9 credits needed to complete their degree in his/her fourth semester while retaining Promise funding. In no other circumstances, excluding exceptions outlined in this document, will students be able to retain Promise funding while enrolled less than full-time at CCRI.

### 4. RI Promise for Students with Disabilities

The CCRI Disability Services for Students (DSS) Office is responsible for working with students to make disability accommodations. In some cases, RI Promise students with a documented disability will be able to remain eligible for RI Promise funding while taking fewer than 12 credits per semester.

Students with an approved reduced course load may complete no fewer than 18 credits per academic year while retaining their status in the RI Promise program. However, the RI Promise program will only cover tuition and mandatory fees for two years at CCRI. Students with an approved reduced course load will not be eligible to receive additional RI Promise funding after two years have elapsed.

#### *How to Request a Disability Accommodation*

Students requesting full-time status with a reduced course load must follow the steps below:

1. Visit the [DSS Office website](#) and review the requirements for taking a reduced course load.
2. Submit your completed [Request for Full-time Status Request form](#) and any required documentation to the DSS Office on your home campus no later than one week before the start of classes.
  - a. Students who receive approval of their Request for Full-time Status must remain registered for no fewer than 9 credits per semester.
  - b. Requests for reduced course load are available only for the fall and spring semesters. Students may not receive an approved course load for courses taken during summer sessions.
3. Upon submission of the Request for Full-time Status Request form, DSS will review the student's submission. If DSS determines that a reduced course load is warranted, a recommendation for full-time status will be forwarded to DSS Program Director for final review and approval.
4. Upon final approval:
  - a. The student who submitted the request will receive notification of DSS' decision; and,
  - b. DSS will notify the Office of Financial Aid of its decisions for all students approved for an accommodation for the identified semester.

Students must reapply each semester for Full-time Status with a reduced course load.

## 5. Appeals Processes

### *Disability Services*

Any student who has provided documentation and appropriate forms to disability services for accommodations may appeal a denial of disability accommodation in writing. Students may submit an appeal to [deanofstudents@ccri.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@ccri.edu).

### *Leave of Absence*

Students who apply for a leave of absence and are denied may submit their appeal in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs at [studentaffairs@ccri.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@ccri.edu).

### *Residency*

Student who are denied RI residency status may submit a written appeal. Students must provide documentation and appropriate forms as part of their appeal. Students may submit an appeal to [deanofstudents@ccri.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@ccri.edu).

## B. Return to RI Promise Eligibility

### 1. GPA Improvement

A student who is removed from the RI Promise program due to falling below a 2.5 GPA after his/her first year may be able to return to RI Promise eligibility for their fourth RI Promise semester. A student may return to eligibility if, after the semester removed from RI Promise, he/she returns to CCRI for his/her fourth semester of eligibility and he/she earns a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher. CCRI will conduct a review of students who may be eligible to return to RI Promise eligibility once final grades are available for each fall and spring semester.

### 2. Credit Accumulation Improvement

A student who is removed from the RI Promise program because he/she does not earn 30 credits after their first year (i.e. fall, spring, and summer semesters) may be able to return to RI Promise eligibility for their second spring semester. A student may return to eligibility if, after the semester removed from RI Promise, he/she returns to CCRI for his/her fourth semester of eligibility and he/she earns 45 or more credits. CCRI will conduct a review of students who may be eligible to return to RI Promise eligibility once final grades are available for each fall and spring semester.

### 3. Incomplete Assignments

RI Promise students who do not complete 30 credits within the first year of the program due to an outstanding incomplete assignment(s) may be able to continue to receive RI Promise funding. Students must have written approval from a professor for all incomplete assignment(s). Students with incomplete assignments are responsible for all tuition and fees with no RI Promise funding for the first semester of their second year at CCRI.

Upon submission of outstanding assignments, students may be eligible to resume receipt of RI Promise funding for the first semester of their second year if:

1. Students must have written approval from their professor(s) before the end of the previous semester to submit the assignment after the due date;
2. Late assignments must be submitted no later than the first day of the following semester;
  - a. For example, an incomplete assignment from the spring semester must be submitted on or before the first day of the fall semester;
3. Late assignments are graded by the professor or his/her designee;
4. Graded late assignments leave the student with a passing grade for the course; and,
5. Earning a passing grade for the course brings the student's overall credit count for year one to 30 or more credits.

Should a student satisfy the above criteria, students will be able to resume receive RI Promise funding for their first semester of year two. Any tuition and mandatory fees already paid by the student that are covered by RI Promise will be refunded by CCRI. Refunds are scheduled to begin no later than the third Tuesday of October each year.

## VI. Mistakenly Paid Out-of-Pocket Tuition

Students who pay tuition and mandatory fees and then receive RI Promise funding will receive a refund of their payment once RI Promise scholarships are officially disbursed. Refunds are scheduled to begin no later than the third Tuesday of October each fall and no later than the second Tuesday of March each spring.

## VII. Previous College Credit

All RI Promise students must be enrolled full-time to receive program funding. For students who may have earned college credit(s) prior to full-time enrollment at CCRI, those credits may be applied to the 30 credits per year RI Promise eligibility requirement. Under no circumstances may a student use credits earned prior to full-time enrollment at CCRI toward the "full-time enrollment" program requirement.

CCRI credit earned through dual and/or concurrent enrollment programs with partnering Rhode Island high schools will be counted toward the 30 credits students must earn in their first year to maintain RI Promise eligibility.

College credits earned through 1) Advanced Placement courses and/or 2) International Baccalaureate courses must be considered as part of an incoming student's [Prior Learning Assessment \(PLA\)](#). Credits that are approved through the PLA will be applied toward the 30 credits per year eligibility requirement.

Students who earned credits at a college or university other than CCRI prior to high school graduation or passing the HSED/GED must have their college transcript evaluated by the CCRI Office of Enrollment Services (OES) through the transfer review process. More information on the transfer review process is available on the [OES website](#).



COMMUNITY COLLEGE  

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OF RHODE ISLAND