



Richmond Promise
Annual Report 2024



Our Mission

We see a day when all children in Richmond have access to high-quality education, excel from high school to higher education, attain a postsecondary degree or certification, thrive in the field of their choice, and become a leader of positive change in their community and the world.

Launched in 2016, Richmond Promise is a community-wide postsecondary access and success initiative in Richmond, California. Our work aims to address barriers to higher education access and success for Richmond students in the areas of postsecondary affordability, preparedness, scholar success, and career success. We do this through the awarding of an annual scholarship, college awareness and access programming, Scholar success programming, and career access and success support.

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Executive Director's Letter

Dear Community,

It is with great pleasure that my colleagues and I present you with Richmond Promise's 2024 Annual Report.

For our organization, 2024 represented the beginning of an evolution for Richmond Promise. After almost two years of conceptualizing new career programming for our Scholars, our staff spent 2024 developing RP Leads, our first-ever career accelerator program designed to better prepare our students for thriving careers and adult lives.

Along with RP Leads, we spent the year laying down the groundwork for our first Alumni Association in our ongoing effort to better engage with and support our Scholars after they've earned their degrees and certifications. These initiatives were made possible by the generous support of funders like Kaiser Permanente and the dedication of our staff.

In addition to new programs, I'm proud to share that Richmond Promise experienced important growth in fundraising and development. In 2024, our organization raised more funding through individual donor contributions than any year prior. This was made possible through new fundraising events, as well as our new named scholarship initiative that allows individuals, community organizations, and businesses to establish a scholarship through our organization that supports Scholars in our program.

Lastly, we concluded the year by launching the planning process for Richmond Promise's next strategic plan, Vision 2030. Expected to be finalized in 2025, Vision 2030 will be a multi-year strategic plan that will guide the organization through the early years of our second decade. We're grateful to the Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation for providing funding for our important planning process, and we are excited to share more details about the plan in the near future.

This work, and all other initiatives detailed in this report, would not be possible without our extraordinary staff. I'm thankful for the steadfast leadership of staff members who have carried out our mission over several years, as well as the dedication of new staff members, like Director of Development Hannah Dworkin, who has brought new perspectives and expertise to our work.

I remain incredibly grateful to serve Richmond Promise Scholars everyday, and for the opportunity to advance higher education access and success in my hometown. I hope you enjoy reading our updates from 2024.

Sincerely,

Christopher Whitmore
Executive Director
Richmond Promise

RP Scholars in their own words

Whether enrolling in college or pursuing a Career Technical Education (CTE) certificate, the role of higher education in shaping our future workforce remains as important as ever. At Richmond Promise, we think helping students from Richmond to and through higher education is a promise worth keeping.

So, how are we supporting RP Scholars as they try to chart their own path?

Let them tell you.



Fatoumata

(The) scholarship has allowed me to focus wholeheartedly on my studies and personal growth, empowering me to seize every opportunity without the burden of financial worries.

Kynneddy

Richmond Promise has not only been a financial blessing for my education but they have also provided resources and support that I can take advantage of while in school.

Olinda

I grew up feeling like I shouldn't be attending a well-respected university, but I am, and I have Richmond Promise to thank for their aid and belief in me.

Paulina

(Richmond Promise) gave me the support and resources I needed to take on college, like getting a laptop to do my college work since I couldn't afford one.

Esther

A lot of people only know Richmond Promise for its scholarship but RP does more than provide financial aid. From Near-Peer Ambassadors and Career Hubs to internships and mentoring, RP has many resources to support students.



2024 Scholar Celebration

In August of 2024, Richmond Promise welcomed the community to Civic Center Plaza to celebrate the newest cohort of RP Scholars with the organization's annual Scholar Celebration. Students, families, friends, elected officials and community supporters came together in support of Richmond students as they prepared for the next step in their postsecondary journeys.



The Scholarship

The core of the Richmond Promise model is a community-wide scholarship of \$1,500 that is renewable for up to 4-6 years (depending on a student's path and petition). The scholarship can be used at any nonprofit 2-year, 4-year, or Career Technical Education (CTE) postsecondary institution in the United States. We are proud to support multiple pathways to higher education.

498 Scholars welcomed as part of RP's 2024 cohort

\$12.3 million awarded in scholarships since 2016

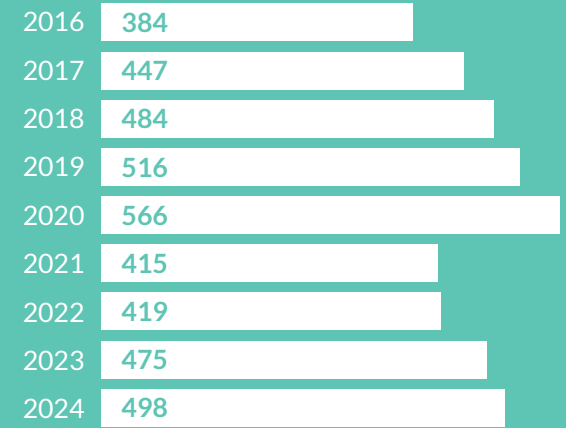
4,200+ RP Scholars served since 2016

64% of RP Scholars are the first in their family to pursue higher education

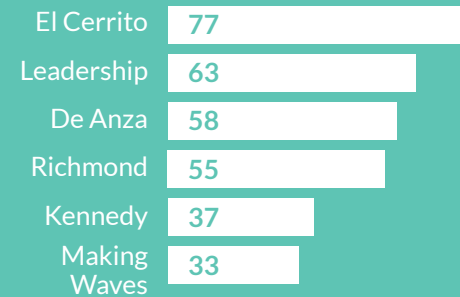
91% of RP Scholars identify as People of Color and/or Indigenous

Students from 20 high schools received the Richmond Promise Scholarship as part of the incoming 2024 cohort. In addition to the top six schools listed above, other 2024 schools include: Alvarado Adult School, Aspire Richmond, Gateway to College, Hercules, Invictus Academy, John Henry, Middle College, Pinole Valley, Sylvester Greenwood Academy, Vista, Salesian, Summit K-2 and Summit Tamalpais.

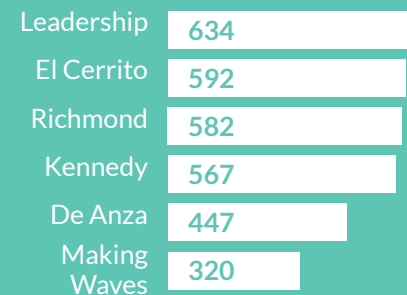
Scholarships Awarded By Year



RP Awardees by High School: Top 6 Schools of 2024



Top 6 schools all-time:





College Access

By creating awareness and providing access to postsecondary pathways, Richmond Promise works to address some of the main barriers to college success that Richmond students face. RP's College Access team works in West Contra Costa

Unified School District (WCCUSD) classrooms, partners with the district's College & Career staff, and collaborates with community organizations to provide students with the relevant information needed to apply to college or enroll in a CTE program.

Events Participated In and Hosted

In addition to weekly in-classroom programming and office hours hosted at multiple WCCUSD sites, Richmond Promise's College Access staff partnered with the school district and other community organizations to host a number of college awareness and financial aid-related events throughout 2024. These events provided dedicated space for students and families to complete financial aid applications, ask questions and receive assistance from RP staff and our partners.

- * 12 "Cash for College" Workshops
- * 2 Parent & Family Financial Aid ID Nights
- * 10 RP Scholarship Info Sessions
- * 13 College & Career Events



Grant partnership with Ed Fund & WCCUSD

In July, the West Contra Costa Public Education Fund (Ed Fund), Richmond Promise, and the WCCUSD were awarded a \$72,000 grant by the Education Credit Management Corporation Foundation (ECMC) to support a collaborative effort that worked to increase financial aid completion rates throughout West Contra Costa. The grant came as part of ECMC's FAFSA Student Support Strategy that utilized federal fund resources in an effort to address lower FAFSA completion rates nationwide.

DeJean Middle field trip to UCB

In May, the RP College Access team partnered with Lovonya DeJean Middle School and the Cameron Institute to host a field trip to UC Berkeley for Richmond middle schoolers. Students were led on a tour of campus by current RP Scholars and got to take in a baseball game that featured another RP Scholar, Cal Baseball's Rodney Green Jr.



Near-Peer Ambassadors

Richmond Promise's College Access work is supported throughout the school year by a group of current RP Scholars known as Near-Peer Ambassadors (NPA). NPAs are local college students who serve as valuable resources for students who are navigating the college application process. By sharing their own experiences, NPAs provide future Scholars with invaluable firsthand peer support.

2024 Near-Peer Ambassadors:

Leonel Acevedo, San Francisco State University

Luis Barrera, Contra Costa College

Yureidy Bravo, UC Berkeley

Geovany Castaneda, Saint Mary's College of California

Maritza Lopez, San Francisco State University

Cristian Mendez, Southern New Hampshire University/Rivet School

Luis Orellana, San Francisco State University

Pawandeep Singh, Diablo Valley College/Contra Costa College

Analucia Urias Lopez, Contra Costa College

"With this opportunity, I can spread awareness to students about the Richmond Promise Scholarship and all the benefits that come with it. I am hoping to inform local students about the resources available to them that will help them throughout their college journey." – *Cristian Mendez*



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR HARD WORK AND EXCELLENCE IN CONTINUING ON TO HIGHER EDUCATION. WE ARE PROUD TO INVEST IN YOU AND YOUR FUTURE! YOU ARE A POSITIVE AND IMPACTFUL LEADER REPRESENTING THE RICHMOND PROMISE.

Scholar Success

Richmond Promise staff works to support Scholars through their postsecondary journeys through student-centered success initiatives like summer workshops, campus visits and cross-sector collaborations. Scholars

also play a major role in providing programmatic feedback, and staff works to provide opportunities that not only help with persistence but also pave the way for success after graduation.

Cynt Marshall meets with RP Scholar graduates at UC Berkeley

One of Richmond Promise's biggest events in 2024 came high atop California Memorial Stadium when Scholars who graduated from UC Berkeley got a chance to meet and spend time with Dallas Mavericks CEO and Richmond native Cynt Marshall. Thanks to the support of the Cameron Institute and Cal Athletics, Richmond Promise staff and Board members hosted a reception for Scholars that followed the main UC Berkeley commencement ceremony at which Marshall was the keynote speaker. Graduates got to chat with Marshall, received copies of her book, *You've Been Chosen*, and celebrated a momentous day alongside their fellow Richmond graduates.



1st Year Workshops

The first step for new Richmond Promise Scholars takes place each summer at Contra Costa College as RP staff conducts RP 101 workshops for new cohort members. At each session, RP Scholars complete required documents, develop skills, learn about campus resources and receive presentations on topics like financial literacy and financial aid as they prepare to enter their postsecondary education.



2nd & 3rd Year Workshops

After the successful addition of summer workshops for second-year Scholars in 2023, the Richmond Promise Scholar Success team doubled down in 2024 and added a new series of workshops for Scholars preparing to enter their third year of study. Second-year students attended day-long sessions hosted by Health Career Connection, Wells Fargo and Travis Credit

Union that focused on financial planning. Third-year students met with representatives from Alder Graduate School of Education, Western Governors University and Travis Credit Union to learn about career and financial planning. Each session also included presentations from RP staff on career-related topics like resume building and how to develop an elevator pitch.



RP Visits UC Davis Scholars

Throughout the spring semester, RP's Scholar Success team visited Northern California campuses to provide resources and build community for RP Scholars. At a gathering of UC Davis Scholars, the group received a presentation from Ken Barnes of the UC Davis Internship and Career Center in which he shared insights on career planning and opportunities that they might take advantage of on their own campus.



Scholar Advisory Board

The Richmond Promise Scholar Advisory Board provides important feedback on the Scholar experience and recommends programming opportunities from the Scholar point of view.

2024 Scholar Advisory Board

Joseph Lopez, San Francisco State University
Nolberth Calderon, UC Merced
Harpreet Kaur Chhina, University of Southern California
Johan Garcia, Contra Costa College
America Leon, Contra Costa College
Martin Leung, UCLA
Esther Nguyen, UC Davis
Ryen-Amirah Reed, Howard University
Sabine Rodriguez, UC Berkeley
Yeison Samayoa, UC Santa Cruz

Research Success

RP Scholar and UC Santa Cruz student Yeison Samayoa showed off the work he's doing by participating in the 2024 Koret UC Leads Research and Leadership Symposium at UC Berkeley. Yeison presented research related to hydrogen production and received both an honorable mention and a top 5 placement in physical sciences.



Career & Alumni Success

Mentor/Mentee Spotlight:

Megan Sanchez & Marissa Chávez

Entering the 2023-24 school year, University of San Diego senior Megan Sanchez knew graduate school would be part of her future plans. So, she joined the Mentor Program with the hopes of gaining a bit of guidance as she went through the application process. Eventually, she got paired with Marissa Chávez, Senior Manager of Content at the California College Guidance Initiative, and the two got to work on grad school applications. In March, Megan got the notification that she'd been accepted into the San Diego State Ed.S. in School Psychology program.

“Marissa’s assistance in the application process is like sailing a ship: they help you chart the course from preparing the course of applications to maneuvering the interview, all while navigating my unpredictable sea of emotions while we wait for a response” said Sanchez. “They have been my cheerleader, my go-to resource, and my constant reminder that it’s possible, boosting my confidence along the way.”

Want to join the RP Mentor Program? Visit richmondpromise.org/mentorship for more information.



YouthWORKS Career Fair

Richmond Promise is proud to partner with Richmond YouthWORKS as it provides career pathways for young people throughout the city of Richmond. In May, YouthWORKS hosted a Youth & Young Adult Career Fair at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium, and Richmond Promise was on hand to provide information about the RP Scholarship as well as career services that RP Scholars can take advantage of while receiving the scholarship. The event was well attended and provided young people in Richmond with a great opportunity to receive career-related resources from businesses and organizations throughout the area.



Advocacy on Behalf of Richmond Students

RP Leading on National Stage

As part of the College Promise National Convening in Knoxville, Tenn., Richmond Promise Executive Director Christopher Whitmore was named as one of six appointees to the College Promise National Leadership Council. In announcing the Council, College Promise CEO Dr. Martha Kanter said “The College Promise National Leadership Council represents the best of what the College Promise movement stands for — dedicated leaders who are committed to greater access and social mobility for all. Their experience and vision will guide us as we expand and enhance College Promise programs nationwide.”



Contra Costa Mayors Conference

In March, Richmond Promise’s Christopher Whitmore and Janae Aptaker of the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC) represented NCCPC at a Contra Costa Mayors Conference meeting held at the Contra Costa Community College District offices in Martinez. The presentation provided elected officials from around the East Bay with a look at the value and importance of city investments in College Promise programs, showcased the work Richmond Promise does on behalf of Richmond students and gave examples of the ways in which that work can be used as a model for other cities across the region.



NCCPC Visits Richmond For Annual Meeting

In April, the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC) hosted its fourth-annual All Member Meeting at CoBiz in Richmond. As a co-founder and active member of NCCPC, Richmond Promise has played an important role in the evolution of NCCPC’s advocacy efforts on behalf of students throughout Northern California. The event featured member and committee updates, panel discussions and an opportunity for members of the Northern California education community to network and mingle not just with each other but also a number of Richmond’s business and community leaders.



PHOTO CREDIT: NCCPC

The Richmond Promise Team

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Leo Visscher
Career Services Manager

Dariana Zermeño
Associate Director of Programs & Partnerships

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Chief Operating Officer, Planned Parenthood Northern California
(Board Chair)

Shasa Curl
City Manager, City of Richmond

Brian Hubinger
Public Affairs Manager, Richmond Chevron Refinery

Michael Littleton
Former Senior Vice President of Finance, Gu Energy Labs

Mojdeh Mehdizadeh
Chancellor, Contra Costa Community College District

Dr. Kim Moses
Interim Superintendent, West Contra Costa Unified School District

Jessica Rodriguez
Project Leader, Boston Consulting Group

Ree'shemah Thornton
Dean of Enrollment Services, Merritt College

2024 Operating Budget

Below is a breakdown of Richmond Promise's 2024 organizational budget. This budget was approved by RP's Board of Directors in December 2023. Audited financials for 2024 will be published on our website in the fall of 2025.

\$3,729,642

Total Budget

6%

Management and General Operations

11%

Fundraising

83%

Scholarships and Program Costs

We are deeply grateful to all of our 2024 supporters!

Individual Donors

Anonymous
Ahmad Anderson
Gazetta Anderson
Linda Andrew-Marshall
Lucy B Anemone
Aaron Baggs
Soheila Bana
Antonio Banuelos
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Amazon
The Anne & Mary Fund
Arzuaga Nelson Giving Fund
California Bank of Commerce
Carica Wines
Chamberlin Education Foundation
Chevron
City National Bank
City of Richmond - Department of Children and Youth
City of Richmond - Environmental & Community Investment Agreement

Community Wealth Partners
CSAA Insurance Group
Flora Family Foundation
Insperity
Inspire U Scholarship
Interactive Resources
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Leshar Foundation
Levin Richmond Terminal Corp
PG&E
Mechanics Bank
Overaa Construction
Phillips 66
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Richmond Wholesale Meats
Riggers Loft Wine Co.
Sims Metal
The Dido Fund
The Omidyar Group
Travis Credit Union

To support Richmond Promise, please visit www.richmondpromise.org/give.

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