

Davenport Promise

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Davenport Promise? The Davenport Promise is an economic development program focused on growth and workforce development, including scholarships for post-secondary education.

What does the Davenport Promise entail?

The Davenport Promise will provide college tuition, vocational training and apprenticeships (as the student chooses) to every child residing in Davenport. Students who choose military service after high school will be welcomed home with a \$7,500 homestead grant.

Who is eligible? All students in the Class of 2009 and beyond, residing in Davenport, are eligible.

Are private, parochial and home-schooled students eligible? If they live in Davenport, yes.

What about Davenport kids living in the Bettendorf or North Scott School Districts?

They are eligible because they live in Davenport.

What about children open enrolled out of the Davenport district?

If a child lives in Davenport and is open enrolled elsewhere as a high school student at the time the program is enacted, they will be eligible. Starting with the Class of 2013, students in public schools will have to be enrolled in their home district to be eligible, except Davenport children in the Bettendorf or North Scott School Districts, who will be permitted to open enroll into the Davenport School District.

How much assistance will the Promise provide?

Four years college tuition, based on two years of community college tuition and two years at a state university – about \$20,000. Students are not required to attend community college. They may go directly to a four year

school. If a student chooses vocational training, they'll receive an amount up to the Scott Community College tuition rate. **Current Davenport children are eligible for 100% of the benefit.** New residents who move to Davenport after the March referendum are eligible for benefits on a sliding scale based on residency length.

Can students use the assistance at any college?

Yes - in-state, out of state, public or private – any accredited school – it is the student's choice.

What is required of students? Besides residing in Davenport, students must participate in community service each year in high school.

How will the Promise be funded? The main source of funds would be utilizing not more than 30% of the City's existing one cent local option sales tax.

Will my taxes go up for the Davenport Promise? No.

Will projects be cut out of the City's Capital Improvement Plan? No. Street and sewer funding will continue without any cuts or deferrals. The only projects recommended to be scaled back are three new park projects. With a growing community, capital projects can be funded with a growing tax base, rather than increasing property tax rates.

I'm a senior citizen on a fixed income. How will this affect me? The Davenport Promise proposal asks the City Council to cap city property taxes for low income senior and disabled homeowners so rising property values would not increase their City property taxes.

Is this a City or School District program? Who will oversee the Promise? It is a City program that will be administered by an independent community foundation. It is not a School District program

What are the next steps? Davenport citizens will vote on March 3, 2009.

FAQ continued...

Is this a “free-ride” for students? No. Students must perform 400 hours of community service before they receive their first Promise dollar.

If I already do volunteer work, do I have to get an additional 400 hours? No. Students are responsible for achieving 400 total community service hours. Existing community service including extra and co-curricular activities will count toward the amount.

If I am already in high school, am I expected to earn 400 community service hours? No. Community service will be prorated by grade for high school students at the time the program is started.

What will it cost to administer the program? The Task Force recommends private dollars be raised for administration and national marketing of the Promise. The Upjohn Institute estimates administration costs of \$90,000 and marketing costs of \$200,000 per year.

I’ve heard the Davenport Promise is modeled after a program in Kalamazoo? An anonymous donor is funding the Kalamazoo Promise, which began in November, 2005. Davenport’s program has a similar scholarship component, but is designed specifically for Davenport. Davenport’s Promise includes school choice, a community service requirement, a veterans homestead benefit, a City tax cap for low income senior and disabled homeowners and increased resources for public safety.

Why is public safety part of the Promise? To keep a growing community safe without further burdening property tax payers.

What have been the results of the Kalamazoo Promise? Over a decade of decline in student enrollment has been reversed, with **more than 1,200 new students enrolling in Kalamazoo Schools in the first two years.** Graduation rates are up and more students are succeeding in college. Property values have held steady in a state experiencing severe decline and **more than 3,500 new jobs have been announced since the Kalamazoo Promise began.**

Will this program attract only poor families? That has not been the experience in Kalamazoo, a city closer to far more poor families than Davenport. Education is a solidly middle class value.

Will the Promise create decline in surrounding cities? That appears unlikely and is not the intent. If Davenport attracts new businesses and residents, the entire region stands to benefit with increased population and more jobs. **The goal is to attract population, investment and jobs to the Quad Cities from across the nation and around the globe.**

Where did the new Kalamazoo students come from? The more than 1,200 new students in Kalamazoo came from 88 Michigan cities, 32 states, and 9 countries.

How do we know jobs will come with the Promise? We know there is a growing mismatch between the skills needed for economic growth and our future workforce. The State of Iowa estimates as many as 150,000 jobs will go wanting in the state for lack of qualified workers. In a state experiencing significant job loss, the Kalamazoo region has added over 3,500 jobs since the Promise was announced.

Who is responsible for any funding shortfall? It is expected the oversight board would make funding adjustments known on an annual basis to parents of high school students. The reallocation of sales tax would be capped by referendum at 30% of the existing one cent tax. **The program is not a “blank check”.** It would be the oversight board’s responsibility to communicate funding availability and / or obtain supplement funds if necessary.

Why not reallocate gambling funds or hotel taxes for Davenport Promise? Gaming and hotel taxes are insufficient, more variable than sales taxes and are otherwise committed to other uses in the budget.

If taxes will not be increased, why do we need a City tax cap for low income senior or disabled homeowners? If assessed values increase due to the Promise, future City Councils and School Boards could either lower tax rates or use new revenue for better services. To be certain our most vulnerable homeowners are not negatively impacted by home value growth, a City property tax cap is part of the Promise.

One last time — why isn’t the Davenport School District funding this? The Davenport Promise is a City economic development program. While it has an education component (among other components) it is a City initiative, using a City funding source, open to every Davenport student, not just those who attend Davenport School District schools.