VERMONT'S

# Free Degree Promise

**offers a debt-free associate degree through the state's Early College program at the Community College of Vermont (CCV).**



**Vermont has the lowest high school graduation and college continuation rates in New England. A free, fast-tracked associate degree is a game changer.**

**Since the Free Degree Promise was announced:**

- Triple the number of low-income students are accessing Early College at CCV
- Triple the number of Early College completers are persisting toward a CCV degree

**In 2025, CCV graduated its largest-ever cohort of teenagers, half of whom were first-generation college-going.**

**Free Degree Promise students are graduating at twice the rate and in half the time as community college students nationally.**

JUNE 2025 GRADUATES:

| | |
|---|---|
| **25%** | Health Care & Behavioral Science |
| **14%** | Business |
| **17%** | STEM, Environmental Science, and IT |
| **11%** | Design & Media Studies |
| **7%** | Early Childhood Education |



*"With an associate degree, I could get a great accounting job at the age of 19. That feels like a really big win for me."*

—**Donovan**; career goal: Personal financial planner

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## Why CCV:

**Community colleges are engines of economic mobility. CCV serves the greatest number of Vermonters of any college in the state.**

# The FREE DEGREE PROMISE is opening doors to a lifetime of opportunity






**"If I could go back and decide to go to Early College again, would I make the same decisions? In a heartbeat, I would. I wish I had known about the Free Degree Promise earlier on, because I wouldn't have been so worried about what I was going to do after high school.**

–**COLLIN** | VERGENNES
CAREER GOAL: IT AND NETWORK ADMINISTRATION

**"I struggled in the traditional high school setting, and I didn't get the best grades. When I made the decision to go to CCV, it was amazing. I was on the Dean's list studying health sciences. Now that I have my associate degree from CCV, I am on track to get my Bachelor of Science in Nursing at VTSU."**

–**ABBIE** | BARRE
CAREER GOAL: PEDIATRIC NURSE



## 3 FACTORS Contributing to Success

### 1 A commitment to universality

In a state with lots of narrowly scoped scholarships, easily understood, debt-free pathways available to everybody have the power to transform public perception that college is within reach. Students can choose any degree program offered by CCV.

### 2 Support beyond tuition

Students receive enhanced advising and stipends to cover costs like books and transportation -- and CCV is resourced to administer and evaluate the initiative.

### 3 Leveraging public funding

The Free Degree Promise braids together federal Pell grants, the Vermont State Grant, the expanded 802 Opportunity Grant, the state's Early College program and ~$750,000/year in private funding to create accelerated, purposeful pathways for young people.




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For more information on the McClure Foundation, visit mcclurevt.org or contact Executive Director Carolyn Weir at cweir@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 x239.