

Delta Bridge Project Establishes Great River Promise Scholarship Program

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Southern Bancorp's Delta Bridge Project announced Tuesday a \$263,000, three-year matching grant to establish the Great River Promise scholarship program, which will help graduates of high schools in Phillips County to attend Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas.

The program will provide gap scholarship funding for students, who will be eligible to receive Great River Promise scholarships after exhausting all other scholarship and financial aid programs, including federal Pell Grants and the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship. That condition excludes loans, however.

In the end, the Great River Promise will pay the difference between whatever students receive in scholarships and financial aid and the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at PCCUA.

"The Great River Promise tells our young people from a young age that college is a possibility for them, something they should be aiming for," Steven Murray, PCCUA's chancellor, said in a news release.

The Phillips Community College Foundation said it pledged to raise \$250,000 to match the Delta Bridge grant and to create a \$500,000 Great River Promise Endowment to keep the program going.

The PCC Foundation said it also secured a federal Title III grant to help with funding.

To receive scholarships, students must:

- attend four years at any Phillips County high school
- graduate with a high school diploma
- be accepted as a student at PCCUA and enroll in the fall semester after graduation
- achieve a 95 percent attendance and punctuality record over the four years of high school
- have no drug or drunken driving offenses

Once at PCCUA, students must enroll for at least 15 credit hours per semester and maintain a 2.0 grade point average.

The Delta Bridge Project is an effort by Phillips County to combat decades of economic stagnation and population decline.

Tuesday's announcement comes after another "promise" scholarship launched last month, also backed by Southern Bancorp. The Arkadelphia Promise Scholarship, funded by the Ross Foundation and Southern Bancorp, both of Arkadelphia, [provides the balance of college tuition for graduates of Arkadelphia High School](#) who are eligible for Arkansas lottery-funded scholarships.

Both programs come more than three years after the [El Dorado Promise](#), a scholarship program for graduates of El Dorado High School funded by Murphy Oil Corp.

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