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**Contact:** Jason Cornwall (ESD) | [Jason.Cornwall@esd.ny.gov](mailto:Jason.Cornwall@esd.ny.gov) | (800) 260-7313  
ESD Press Office | [pressoffice@esd.ny.gov](mailto:pressoffice@esd.ny.gov) | (800) 260-7313

## **EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES \$20 MILLION TO PROVIDE FREE COLLEGE TUITION TO SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOLS GRADUATES**

***More Than 1,000 Students Eligible for Transformative Scholarship Each Year***

***Program is Key Component of “Central New York Rising” – Strengthening Workforce and Revitalizing Region’s Economy***

Empire State Development today announced that the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council has been awarded \$20 million for the Syracuse College Promise endowment program. The initiative provides free college tuition to every graduating student of the Syracuse City School District – more than 1,000 students per year – regardless of their income. The funding is made possible by Central New York’s \$500 million Upstate Revitalization Initiative award, announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in December.

"The underpinning of a strong Central New York economy is its workforce, and this funding provides the best possible foundation to meet the growing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," **said President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky**. "In partnership with Governor Cuomo, this regional council is making higher education a top priority – growing talent, creating jobs and innovating this region forward. I thank County Executive Joanie Mahoney for her leadership, and am proud to see the Syracuse College Promise endowment make college a reality for thousands of promising young people."

The scholarship program is the first workforce development project to receive funding from the Upstate Revitalization Initiative and is a key component of [Central New York Rising](#), the region’s comprehensive blueprint to develop economic growth by capitalizing on global market opportunities, strengthening entrepreneurship and creating an inclusive economy. The plan is actively leveraging more than \$2.9 billion in private investment, creating new jobs and generating an economic revival in Central New York.

The Syracuse College Promise endowment has fulfilled the goal of the Say Yes to Education program, which began as a community-based initiative aiming to secure \$30 million from individual and corporate donors. Over the last seven years, the endowment

was able to raise \$10 million in donations. This \$20 million will complete the endowment drive and make it a self-perpetuating fund.

Eligible students must:

- Reside in Syracuse;
- Continuously enroll in a SCSD high school from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades (or be legally designated as having refugee status on an Arrival-Departure Record, or I-94, from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or be an otherwise eligible noncitizen);
- Have graduated from a public high school in the city of Syracuse within the last 12 months;
- Enroll full-time at a college or university in New York State within one year of high school graduation; and
- Apply and remain eligible for financial aid each year.

The scholarship program will be administered by the Central NY Community Foundation. Students may apply for financial assistance through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) and any funding not met will be covered through the Syracuse College Promise endowment program. More information will be available in the coming weeks.

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