



## **JAMES W. COOPER AND HARTFORD PROMISE MENTORING PROGRAM**

The James W. Cooper Fellows and Hartford Promise have teamed up to create a concentrated program to provide Fellows the opportunity to serve as mentors for a cohort of Hartford Promise's potential "Promise Scholars."

### **HARTFORD PROMISE – reaching higher:**

Hartford Promise is a nonprofit organization that was recently founded specifically to address the extremely low percentage of Hartford public high school students going to and graduating from college. Their motto is "*reaching higher*" and their ambitious goals include expanding educational opportunities for the children of Hartford, and in doing so transform the lives of Hartford students and transform our city.

As both a large scale College Scholarship Fund and Integrated College Success Program, Hartford Promise provides Hartford students financial resources, support services, and key relationships that lead to college success. Their aim is to strengthen Hartford's culture, increase student expectations, increase the number of Hartford students going to and graduating from college, and add to a larger, more qualified, local work force.

To become a Promise Scholar, students must: **1. Reside in Hartford for all 4 years of high school; 2. Attend a Hartford Public High School for all 4 years; 3. Have a 93% high school attendance; and 4. Have a 3.0 cumulative GPA.**

All students who qualify receive up to \$20,000 in scholarships to any accredited college/university and will also benefit from being part of the College Success Model of "*Reaching Forward and Reaching Back*," where they are connected to key resources, supports, services, and relationships both in high school and at the colleges they attend. Research shows that these kinds of relationships are central to college success for first-generation, low-income minority students.

One aspect of "*Reaching Back*" includes mentorship of students that are identified as being "Nearly On Track" or "Nearlies," i.e. students who are above 2.75 GPA and/or 89% attendance, and seniors who are above 2.85 GPA and/or 91% attendance. The goal is that with our help as mentors, the Cooper Fellows will be able to help them get or stay "On Track" through graduation, and become Hartford Promise Scholars, with all the benefits and support that come with that honor.

We encourage you to explore the Hartford promise website at [www.HartfordPromise.org](http://www.HartfordPromise.org).

### **THE CBF JAMES W. COOPER FELLOWS:**

The Connecticut Bar Foundation, through its James W. Cooper Fellows Program, promotes equal access to justice in Connecticut. Fellows serve the goals of the CBF by sponsoring, among other things, educational and community service programs. Fellows have asked for more projects that would allow them to contribute their time and energy to the larger community. This partnership with Hartford Promise allows Fellows to make an impact by providing individual Hartford public high school students the life-changing opportunity to go to college.



### THE PILOT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM:

The initial pilot program started in the fall of the 2017-2018 academic year, and it proved to be beneficial to many of the student mentees and very satisfying for their Fellow mentors.

Hartford Promise will identify new students to be part of the Program for this 2018-19 school year. All 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade “Nearly On Track” students, and possibly some “On Track” students at the selected schools, will be part of the Program.

Hartford Promise will screen and run background checks on each mentor before final assignment. Mentors should be available, eager to help, easy to talk to, and able to let the students know that they matter.

A one to two hour training session for new mentors will be provided to assist the mentors in understanding the objectives of Hartford Promise and the needs of the students being mentored. We hope to hold a training session by early in November, and to begin the program with the students before Thanksgiving.

It is anticipated that each mentor would choose to be assigned one or two students. The amount of time that mentors would spend with these students and what they would hope to achieve in the relationship will remain somewhat open-ended. Generally, there is a need to help the students become empowered with the knowledge they have someone to turn to for support in their college prep, college decision-making, and problem solving. Assistance with academic work will also be part of the relationship.

We do expect that each mentor will have an initial in-person meeting to learn more about the students and to develop mutual expectations. It is also anticipated that the mentoring will require two to four hours per month over the school year and summer. There is a particular need to maintain connections with students over the summer as they move to the next grade level and from high school on to higher education.

After the initial face to face meetings, it is expected that mentors would:

- Check in with his/her mentee(s) 2 times/month. Check-ins could be in person, by phone, email and/or by text. Mentors may also meet in groups with other mentors and their mentees.
- Help mentees be aware of their Promise Scholarship “On Track” status with a regularly updated **Promise Progress Report** that will reflect attendance and GPA status.
- Help mentees be more aware of and prepared for college.
- Augment in school College Counselor assistance by helping with conversations around college possibilities, college costs, and college requirements and challenges, and by fielding student questions regarding same.
- Help students with upcoming deadlines, for such items as college applications, college essays, FAFSA deadlines and potential other scholarship deadlines, and where appropriate help review same.
- If possible, it would be helpful to take students on a college visit or two.

We are excited to invite you to join this mentoring program.