



**Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury**

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## **Tennessee Promise COVID Adjustments May Have Boosted Enrollment**

The Tennessee Comptroller's latest update on the Tennessee Promise program notes that certain adjustments to the scholarship eligibility requirements may have prompted more applicants to enroll as Promise students in the fall of 2020.

The Tennessee Promise program, which began in 2015, gives recent high school graduates the opportunity to earn an associate degree or technical diploma free of tuition and mandatory fees.

In the fall of 2020, 19,326 Promise students enrolled in college. This was the largest cohort since the program began. Analysts from the Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) believe the decision to allow students to attend a mandatory mentor meeting online and the waiver of the community service requirement due to the COVID-19 pandemic may have allowed more students to remain eligible for the program.



OREA's ongoing evaluation of Promise also showed that Tennessee's overall college-going rate has been declining since 2017; the number of students applying for the Promise scholarship has decreased since 2019; and Promise student success rates have slightly declined across the first three cohorts (2015-2017).

Tennessee is currently on track to meet the Drive to 55 goal, but OREA analysts believe more efforts may be needed to help reach the goal of having 55% of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential by 2025. Based on the most current data, the attainment rate is 46.8%.

The Comptroller's Office continues to study the Tennessee Promise Scholarship and anticipates releasing its next evaluation of the program in 2024.

To read the 2022 update, please visit the Comptroller's website at: [tncot.cc/orea](https://tncot.cc/orea).

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