



Beating the Odds



Reach Higher + Better Make Room + Common App



Reach Higher is an initiative started in 2014 by former First Lady Michelle Obama during her time at the White House to encourage students to complete their education and own their futures by attaining a postsecondary credential, whether at a university, community college, through an industry-recognized training program, or through the military.

In October 2015, Mrs. Obama launched **Better Make Room**, a peer-to-peer awareness campaign targeting Generation Z to celebrate education, change the national conversation, and give students the tools and resources they need to continue their education past high school.

In 2019, Reach Higher joined **Common App**, a non-profit membership organization dedicated to access, equity, and integrity in the college admissions process. Its members include more than 800 diverse colleges and universities across all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and 20 countries. Each year, more than one million students – a third of whom are first generation – apply to college using Common App's free online application system.



Combating Summer Melt

High school graduation is a big step in the life of a young person. Students make a plan for their futures and assume the best.

However, 10-20% of students who make a concrete commitment to go to college never make it.

Financial burden, fear of leaving home, and enrollment requirements are a few factors that lead to this phenomenon known as **Summer Melt**. In some communities, as many as **40%** of students who intend to go to college never get there.



Caring adults and strong systems of support must help students to stay on track, stay committed to attending, and remind them to complete all of the necessary tasks to start college on the first day of classes.





**Beating the Odds
with Reach Higher**

Beating the Odds is an event to commemorate, support, and encourage recent high school graduates on their way to college.

For students to beat the odds, they need targeted support during the summer before college so they arrive prepared academically, socially, and emotionally to succeed.

Hosting a **Beating the Odds Summit** is a way to support your students who have overcome obstacles to go to college. It is also a time to keep students on track to be ready on day one.





Planning a Beating the Odds Event

How to Celebrate

Plan your event

Download the guide on [ReachHigher.org](https://www.reachhigher.org). Plan the basic details: date, location, time, speakers, students, etc.

Set the date

Celebrate at a time that is best for your schedules. That could be any time over the summer, keeping in mind graduation activities, school orientation sessions, and college freshmen events in mid-August.

Register your event at [ReachHigher.org](https://www.reachhigher.org)

Let us know when and where you're going to celebrate!



What to Do at Your Event

Any combination of the following:



A panel discussion with recent college grads to talk about their college experience and share advice



Review financial aid, FAFSA requirements, and other materials students may need at the start of the semester



An honest question and answer session about what to expect academically, socially, and emotionally



Have some fun by celebrating your students' accomplishments



A workshop for students to set goals for the first week, month, semester, and year



Share student contact information so that they will have a support system of their peers in place before even leaving home

Your event should be fun and informative, making sure that students know where to go for help leading up to and during the first few weeks and months on campus.

Remember to put personal touches on the event. Ask your students how they want to celebrate and what they want to discuss before heading off to college. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to hosting Beating the Odds.

Topics to Address

Finances

- Are there any outstanding payments to make to the college bursar?
- Are all financial forms complete?
- Do students have a trusted plan to physically get to campus on the first day?

Support Systems

- What advice can you give to students about succeeding during their first year?
- Who is a trusted resource each student can call, text, or email with any question at any time?

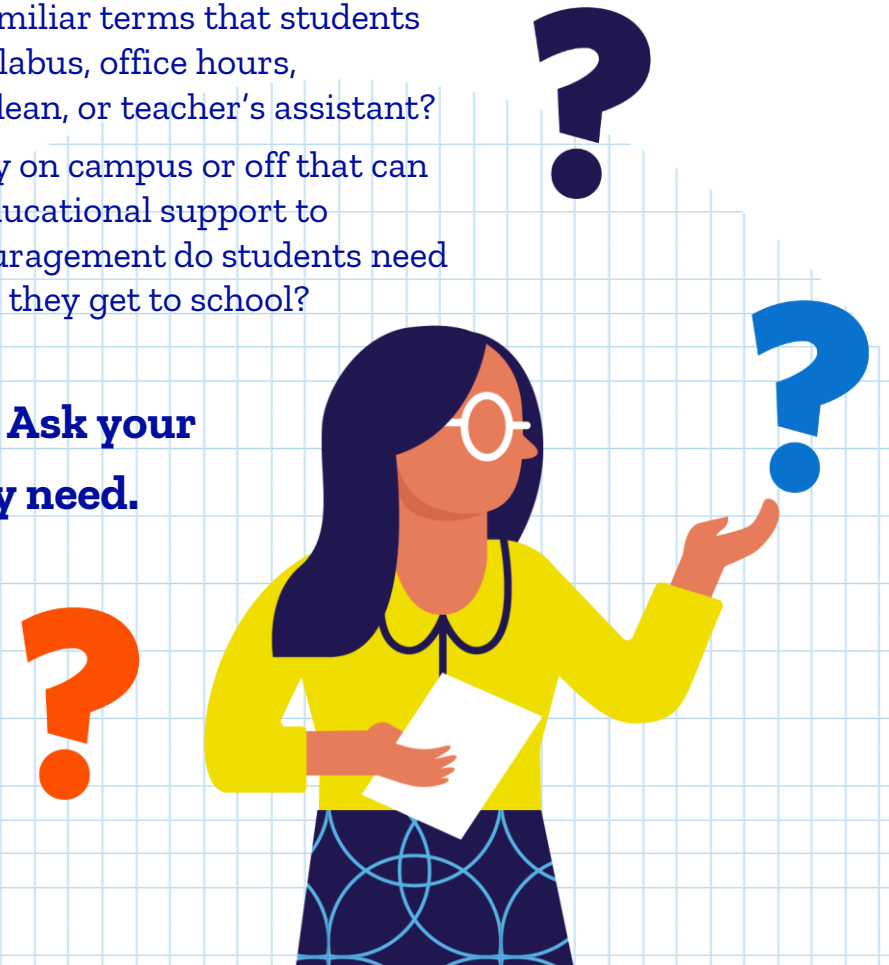
Campus Life

- Do students know what they need for their dorm rooms?
- Have they completed their health forms?

University Resources

- Do students know what a bursar is and what that office does?
- Are there other unfamiliar terms that students should know, like syllabus, office hours, sabbatical, provost, dean, or teacher's assistant?
- Is there a community on campus or off that can offer emotional or educational support to students? What encouragement do students need to stay on track once they get to school?

This is just a start. Ask your students what they need.



Share Your Event on Social Media

Using social media is a fun way to highlight your students and to get them involved behind the scenes.

Post the photos on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat with the hashtags #BeatingTheOdds and #BetterMakeRoom.

Tag @ReachHigher, @BetterMakeRoom, & @ReachHigher2020 (on Instagram) on your posts so that everyone can follow along with your celebration.



What's Next

In short, here's what you need to do:

- Plan your Beating the Odds summit
- Register your event at ReachHigher.org
- Email us if you have questions at info@reachhigher.org
- Share photos from your celebration on social media using #BeatingTheOdds, and tag Reach Higher and Better Make Room





For Updates + More Information

BetterMakeRoom.org | ReachHigher.org

 [@ReachHigher](https://twitter.com/ReachHigher) | [@BetterMakeRoom](https://twitter.com/BetterMakeRoom)

 [@ReachHigher2020](https://www.instagram.com/ReachHigher2020) | [@BetterMakeRoom](https://www.instagram.com/BetterMakeRoom)

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