

REACH HIGHER

College Signing Day Toolkit



REACH HIGHER





Former First Lady Michelle Obama launched the [Reach Higher](#) initiative to inspire students – particularly first-generation college students and students from low-income families – to go to and complete higher education, whether at a four-year college, a two-year community college, through an industry-recognized certification program, or through the military.

[Better Make Room](#) is the student-facing campaign supporting Reach Higher that speaks to students in their own language. Better Make Room aims to elevate college students and says to the world, "These young people are about to do something great. We Better Make Room."

Reach Higher and Better Make Room are now part of [Common App](#), a non-profit membership organization dedicated to access, equity, and integrity in the college admission process.

A Message from Michelle Obama

I am thrilled to know you are hosting College Signing Day in your community. These events offer a unique opportunity to celebrate graduating seniors, showcase student leaders, and inspire more young people to take the first steps on their journey to higher education.

We launched Reach Higher at a College Signing Day in 2014 because we wanted to recognize students and put them and their academic accomplishments first. I love to learn about these remarkable young people across the country who are taking charge of their future and committing to higher education.

I hope this toolkit will provide you with a range of resources and ideas to make your College Signing Day a success. I wish you the very best for a wonderful celebration.

[Watch Mrs. Obama's video online.](#)



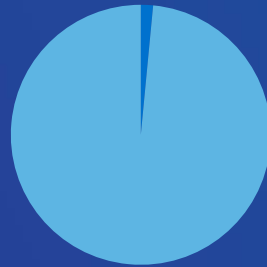
The College Challenge

Education after high school is a critical part of a successful future.

According to the Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce:

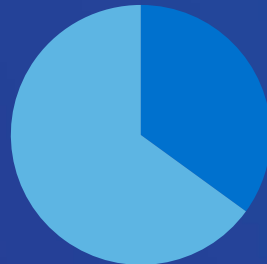
MORE THAN 99%

of the jobs created during the most recent economic recovery were filled by workers with some education beyond high school.



65% OF THE JOBS

of the future will require more than a high school diploma.



Yet, too many young people today are not choosing to pursue higher education.

College Signing Day celebrates students.

Whether at a community college, a university, a certification program, the military, or any other education past high school, College Signing Day shows support for this future.

College Signing Day is recognized every year on May 1st, but can be celebrated by schools, organizations, and communities, any day that works best for your students.

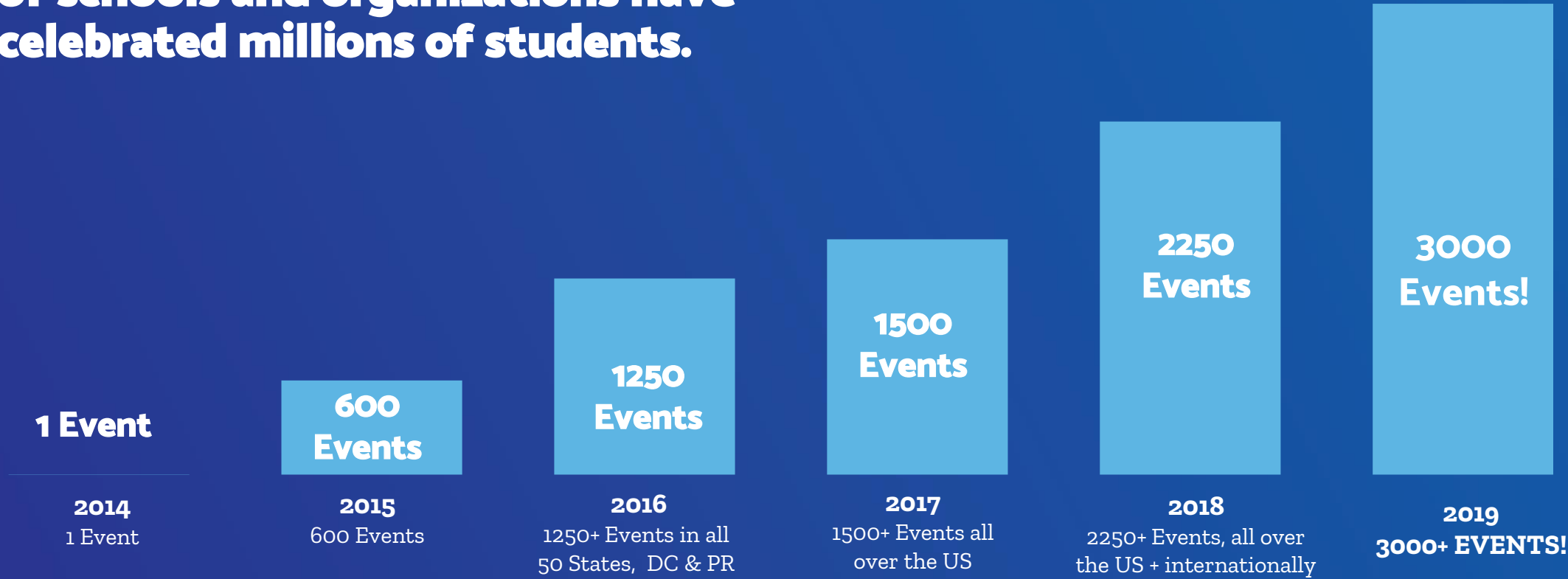
What is College Signing Day?

- **College Signing Day is an opportunity to celebrate students committing to pursue their education past high school,** whether to obtain a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a certificate or industry-recognized credential, as well as students entering the military. Traditionally we celebrate on May 1st to coincide with the deadline many colleges and universities set for students to commit to attend.
- **Reach Higher was launched at a College Signing Day event in San Antonio, Texas in 2014.** The community there celebrated all of their students' goals for higher education. Mrs. Obama joined them and made sure to continue the celebration in schools and districts all across the country for years to come.

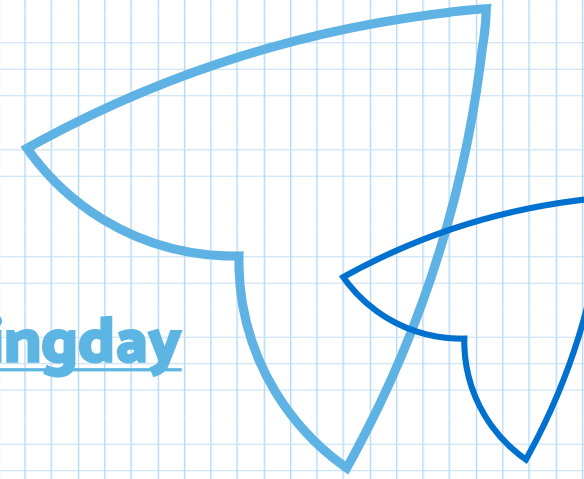


Signing Day Success

Over the last six years, thousands of schools and organizations have celebrated millions of students.



Toolkit + Resources



The resources and ideas on BetterMakeRoom.org/collegesigningday will help you plan your **College Signing Day event.**

- Funding Your Event
- Event Cards
- Professional Hashtag Signs
- In-House Hashtag Signs
- #CollegeSigningDay Gear
- Sponsor Ask Letter
- Elected Official Ask Letter
- Social Media Guide
 - Social Profile Graphics
 - Social Post Graphics

How to Celebrate College Signing Day

Host a College Signing Day Celebration.

➤ **Register at**
[BetterMakeRoom.org/collegesigningday](https://www.bettermakeroom.org/collegesigningday)

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

➤ **Download the guides.**

Use our templates to help you plan the details of your event.

➤ **Set the date.**

You can hold your College Signing Day event anytime in the spring, but be sure to post on social media on May 1st!

➤ **Celebrate!**

Share your event on social media with #CollegeSigningDay and #BetterMakeRoom

The image shows two overlapping screenshots of the BetterMakeRoom.org website. The top screenshot displays the homepage with a navigation menu (OUR STORY, SIGNING DAY, UP NEXT, TOOLS, GET INVOLVED, VIDEOS, OUR TEAM, PARTNERS, DONATE) and a large banner featuring a woman celebrating. The bottom screenshot shows a registration form titled "REGISTER YOUR EVENT BELOW!" with a sub-header "Scroll down to the middle of the page for helpful resources." The form includes a prominent blue button labeled "DOWNLOAD THE COLLEGE SIGNING DAY TOOLKIT". Below the button are several input fields: "First Name *", "Last Name *", "Email Address *", "Date of Signing Day Event *", "Event City *", "Event State *", and "Point of Contact Name *". There is also a checkbox for "I believe in my students and their future." with "Yes" and "No" options. A small asterisk indicates that fields with an asterisk are required.

How to Celebrate Students

It's time to have a party and get everyone excited!

Ask students to wear a t-shirt or hat from their college of choice to show off their decision. Ask your guests and colleagues to do the same (whether it's the college they attended or just their favorite).

Everyone decked out in their college gear will make for a great photo opportunity, so have your cameras ready! Use materials you have in your classroom. Ask your school art department to make a backdrop or props for fun photos. We provide signs at [BetterMakeRoom.org](https://www.bettermakearoom.org) that you can download, print, and decorate.

Get your juniors involved too! Ask them to create a [Common App](#) account and add at least five colleges to their list to start researching schools. This will help them get ready to complete college applications in the future.



How to Pick the Venue

You don't need a big stadium to make the day unforgettable.

Host your event at your school gym or athletic field, a cafeteria, or a community center. We've seen photos of celebrations in classrooms, courtyards, and shopping malls. Get creative!

How to Invite Guests

There are plenty of supporters who will want to celebrate!

- ▶ Parents, teachers, counselors, administrators
- ▶ Local government officials
- ▶ Local celebrities or people of influence

Download a sample invitation on [BetterMakeRoom.org](https://www.bettermakearoom.org)!



How to Celebrate on Social Media

Using social media is a fun way to highlight your students and their accomplishments.

Share photos of your students wearing college gear and holding signs to celebrate the day. Post them on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat with the hashtags **#CollegeSigningDay** and **#BetterMakeRoom**. Tag us in your posts so that everyone can follow along with your celebration!

Twitter: [@ReachHigher](#) [@BetterMakeRoom](#)

Instagram: [@ReachHigher](#) [@BetterMakeRoom](#)

Facebook: [ReachHigher](#) [BetterMakeRoom](#)



likes

phons Congratulations to all of our seniors! Yesterday
to colleges and universities all across the nation
#collegesigningday #regalpride #wem



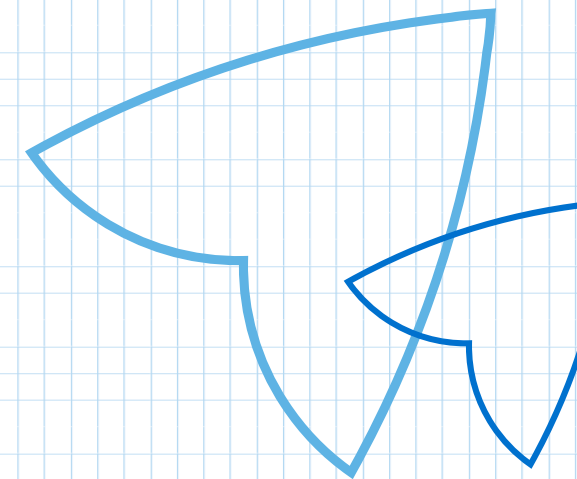
FlashbackFriday to Bravo students' afterschool
in May! This week, our last recent



Signing Day for the John
!!!! 94% of class is signed into
st-secondary choice!!!



How to Celebrate in Elementary and Middle Schools



This is a great opportunity to promote college exploration!

- Design a Commitment to My Future pledge for students to take action to keep on the path to college.
- Coordinate a college field trip for students and families.
- Host a family college night with information about early ways to prepare for college.
- Take photos of students in a cap and gown with signs depicting what they want to be when they grow up.
- Dedicate time for a college exploration class showing students how to research colleges.
- Organize a college fair during lunch or after school
- Invite alumni who are in college to speak at an assembly about their experiences
- Design a bulletin board with school staff photos and a map of where they attended college
- Teach students college chants and perform them together at an assembly
- Host a step show featuring local college students who can later interact with students and answer questions

How to Fund the Event

Hosting an event doesn't have to cost a lot of money.

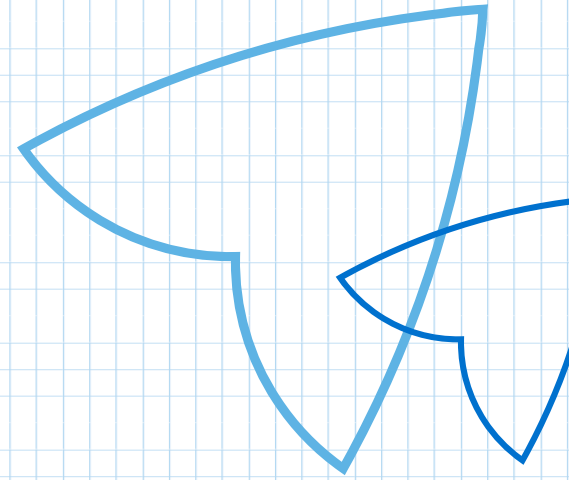
But, thanks to the [College Football Playoff Foundation](#), we provide school counselors, teachers, and faculty members at public schools the opportunity to apply for a microgrant toward your College Signing Day event on [DonorsChoose.org](#)! The money can be used to buy supplies from a list of over [20 approved vendors](#) on DonorsChoose.org.



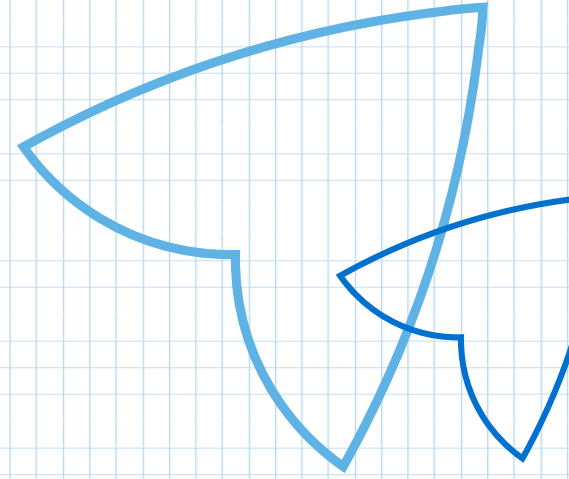
COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF
FOUNDATION



DonorsChoose.org



How to Apply for Funds



To apply for funding, follow these steps in order:

1. Register your event on <https://www.BetterMakeRoom.org/collegesigningday/>
2. Go to www.donorschoose.org/teachers and create a school counselor or teacher account. Account holders must be current educators at a public elementary, middle, or high school.
3. Create a project for the materials you need to host your College Signing Day. DonorsChoose.org has a list of approved vendors that you can visit to purchase materials for your College Signing Day event.
4. **Once your project is screened by DonorsChoose.org, you will be notified with next steps by the DonorsChoose.org team. Be sure to look for this notification from DonorsChoose.org.**
5. Once DonorsChoose.org approves your project, email info@reachhigher.org with the link to your project.

How to Raise Funds

You do not need a lot of money—or any money at all!—to host a meaningful and fun event. But there are ways to raise funds to support you:

- Community partners can provide donations of funds, materials or services. Find a sponsorship outreach letter template on [BetterMakeRoom.org](https://www.bettermakeroom.org) that you can download and customize to ask local businesses to sponsor your College Signing Day.
- Also find a link to our Better Make Room [Zazzle store](#) where you can purchase official College Signing Day swag like t-shirts, buttons, and stickers for students and guests!



How to Host a Digital College Signing Day

Can't host an in-person event? Here's how you can also celebrate College Signing Day online.

Post photos on social media of alums in college gear or throwback photos from their days on campus. Describe your fondest college memories in social media posts, showing school spirit, and reminding new students that making the commitment to higher education is worth it. Officially congratulate and welcome all the students committing to attend by reposting their photos, too.

Twitter: [@ReachHigher](#) [@BetterMakeRoom](#)

Instagram: [@ReachHigher](#) [@BetterMakeRoom](#)

Facebook: [ReachHigher](#) [BetterMakeRoom](#)



UMBC
@UMBC

Future members of [#RetrieverNation](#)- one of your first orders of business when you get here will be to stock up on as much black & gold as you can carry. Thanks to our friends at [@umbcbookstore](#) for welcoming AND modeling 🧡🖤! [#CollegeSigningDay](#)



Need More Inspiration?

The best ideas come from the field!

Thousands of high schools, universities, and communities celebrate their graduating students every year. We get the best ideas about how to host celebrations from the field. You should, too!

Search **#CollegeSigningDay** to see best practices from school counselors, educators, and students for how you can celebrate your graduates in no- and low-cost ways.

We've got school spirit! 🎉
[#CollegeSigningDay](#)



Chaffey AVID
@ChaffeyAVID
Our 1st ever College Signing Day is Amazing! Mission: College Success! Thank you to Renaissance, ASB, ROTC, CHS Cheer & everyone who made this event awesome. @CHRenaissance @RIMSAVID #commitmentday2019 #CollegeSigningDay #futurecollegegraduates #chsavidschoolwide



10:58 PM · 23 Apr 19 · Twitter for iPhone

Retweets 217 Likes

...nces from all 8 schools I applied
and I chose Howard. #HU23 ❤️💙
[#CollegeSigningDay](#)



5:20 PM · 01 May 19 · Twitter for iPhone

49 Retweets 381 Likes



What's Next?

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

1. Register your College Signing Day event at BetterMakeRoom.org.
2. Celebrate in your community on a day that works best for you. Involve your students in the planning process.
3. Share photos from your celebration on social media, especially on May 1st. Tag @BetterMakeRoom and @ReachHigher, and use #CollegeSigningDay!
4. Email us if you have questions at info@reachhigher.org.



For Updates and More Information

BetterMakeRoom.org | ReachHigher.org

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

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

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Email: info@reachhigher.org

#BetterMakeRoom | #ReachHigher | #CollegeSigningDay



REACH HIGHER

BETTER
MAKE ROOM

