



#COLLEGE #SIGNINGDAY

2022 toolkit



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 continue their education past high school. Whether that means joining the military, transferring to a new institution, or attending a four-year college, a community college, or an industry-recognized certification program, we want to help students find their path.

Better Make Room is the student-facing campaign supporting Reach Higher that speaks to students directly. Better Make Room aims to elevate college students and says to the world, “These young people are about to do something great, so 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. Together, we work to ensure all students have the tools and knowledge they need to access, afford, and attain opportunity beyond high school.

A message from Michelle Obama

I am so thrilled that you'll be celebrating College Signing Day this year! These occasions are such a wonderful opportunity to recognize the hard work of graduating students and inspire even more young people to take the first steps on their journey to higher education.

Back in 2014, we launched Reach Higher at a College Signing Day because we wanted to provide support to students and celebrate their academic accomplishments. I've always loved learning the stories of young people all across the country, especially those who are taking charge of their future and committing to higher education despite whatever challenges they may face.

I was a first-generation college student myself, so I know firsthand the highs and lows that come with following through with this commitment. But never once did I think that attending college wasn't worth it. Especially now, as we work to recover from this pandemic, it's still the best thing students can do for themselves and their future. That is why I am so thankful for educators and supporters like you who are igniting students' passion to continue learning and growing. In case you don't hear it enough: Thank you.

So whether virtually or safely in person, I hope you enjoy celebrating with us this College Signing Day!

This toolkit provides you with a range of resources and ideas to make your College Signing Day event a success. I wish you the very best for a wonderful and safe celebration.

[Watch my College Signing Day video.](#)

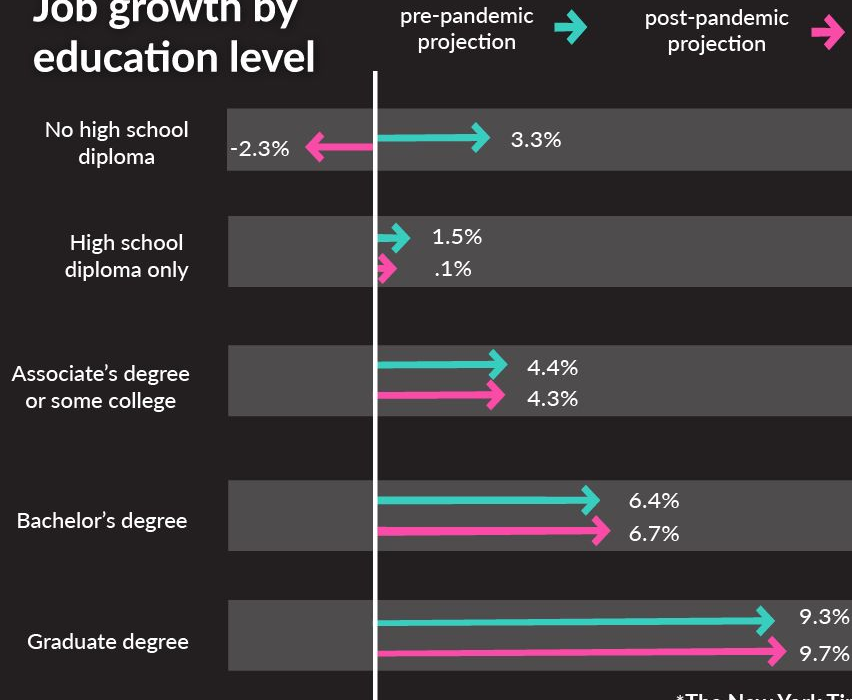


*Michelle
Obama*

Our Ongoing Challenge

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, job opportunities across the next decade will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic*:

Job growth by education level



*The New York Times, published 02/21

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

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

College Signing Day celebrates all students committed to pursuing an education past high school. Whether they plan to attend a community college, a 4-year university, a certification program, the military, transfer institutions, or any other education past high school, College Signing Day shows full support of students making decisions for their future.

Our Ongoing Challenge

This year, especially, it's important to celebrate students committing to pursue higher education.

There has been a

5.1%

decline in enrollment rates since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



This equates to

938,000

students who were accepted but did not enroll.

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

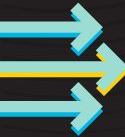
As of February 2022, only

37.6%

of high school seniors have completed the FAFSA.

Form Your Future FAFSA Tracker

What is College Signing Day?



College Signing Day is an opportunity to celebrate students committing to pursue their education past high school. Whether a student wants to earn a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a certificate or industry-recognized credential, transfer to a new institution, or enlist in the military, we want to celebrate them! In the past, we've celebrated on May 1, but you should celebrate on a date that works best for your community and your students.

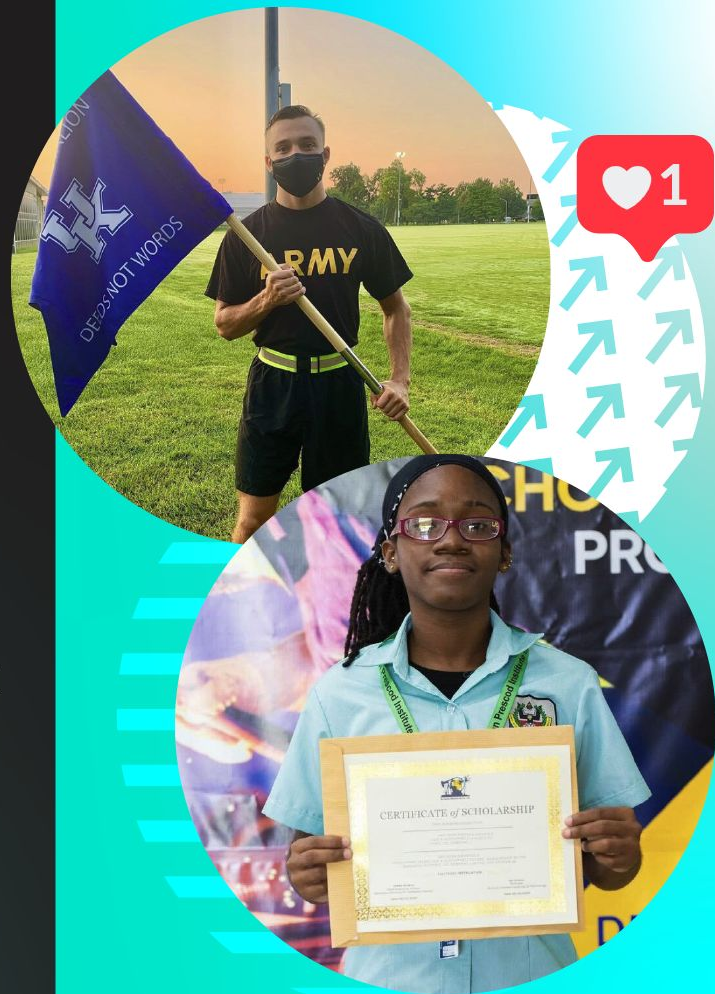


Reach Higher was launched at a College Signing Day event in San Antonio, Texas, in 2014. The community there celebrated all of their students' goals for higher education, and Mrs. Obama joined in the celebrations. This set the standard to continue the celebration in schools and districts all across the country for years to come!

Recognizing all Post-Secondary Plans

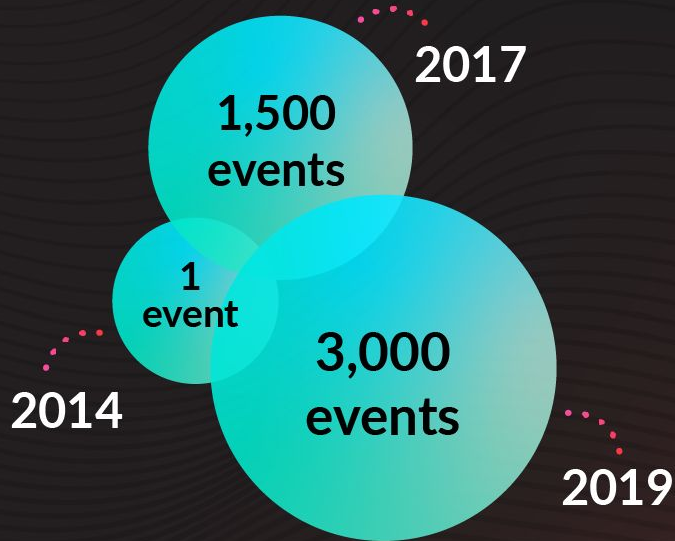
At Better Make Room and Reach Higher, we know there's nothing more important than getting an education past high school, whether at a professional training program, a community college, a four-year college or university, or in the military. That's why we celebrate College Signing Day each year!

However, we recognize that some of your students may not feel like they can participate in College Signing Day if they aren't choosing a "traditional" education experience. Their choice to attend a technical college, earn a certificate, transfer schools, or enlist in the military is just as impactful as attending a two- or four-year institution. Let's celebrate all students together!

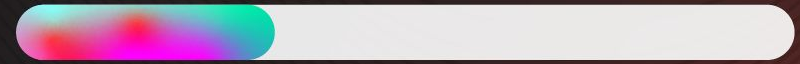


Signing Day Success

Over the last 8 years, thousands of schools and organizations have celebrated millions of students.



And we didn't let the pandemic stop us:



15.7 million views on #CollegeSigningDay TikTok



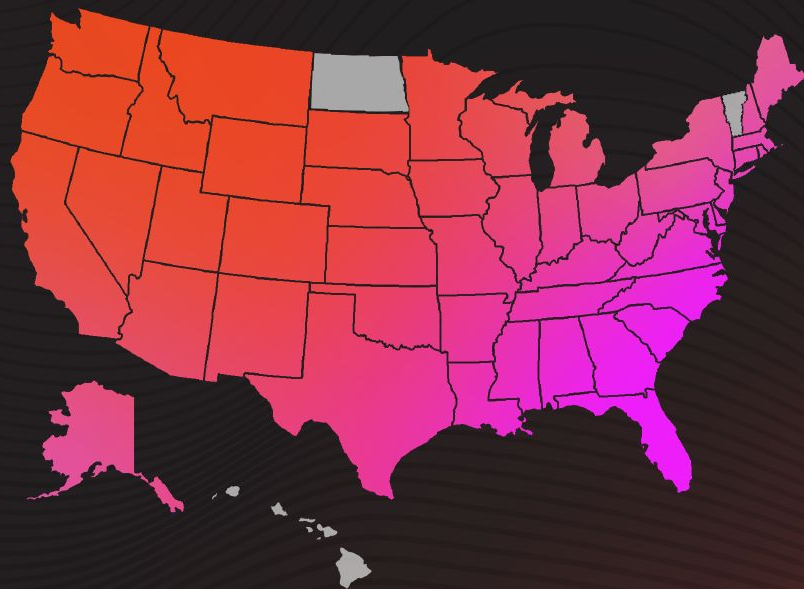
272.6 million social media accounts reached



515.8 million social media impressions

Signing Day Success

In 2021, 47 states hosted College Signing Day celebrations — whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid!



And for the first time, we featured student performers in our virtual College Signing Day!



How to Celebrate College Signing Day

Host a College Signing Day Celebration!

1. Register at BetterMakeRoom.org/CollegeSigningDay

Let us know that you're going to celebrate virtually or safely in person!

2. Set the date

You can celebrate your College Signing Day event any day that works for your students. Be sure to post on social media throughout the month of May as students make their commitments.

3. Download our resources

Use our templates to help you plan the details, especially our social media guide.

4. Celebrate!

Share your excitement on social media with [#CollegeSigningDay](https://twitter.com/CollegeSigningDay) and [#BetterMakeRoom!](https://twitter.com/BetterMakeRoom)



How to Host a Digital College Signing Day

There are so many ways to engage your students virtually!

Invite high school alumni, college and trade school representatives, or a keynote speaker to speak with your students. Ask each student to record a video announcing where they are going and share it online!

Get your ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders involved, too! Ask them to create a Common App account and add 5 colleges to their list to start researching schools. This will help them get ready to complete college applications next year since their information will save and roll over!

Last year, we celebrated College Signing Day virtually and thousands of people did too. Search [#CollegeSigningDay](#) on social media to see best practices from school counselors, educators, and students for how you can celebrate your community in a digital way.



How to Celebrate on Social Media

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

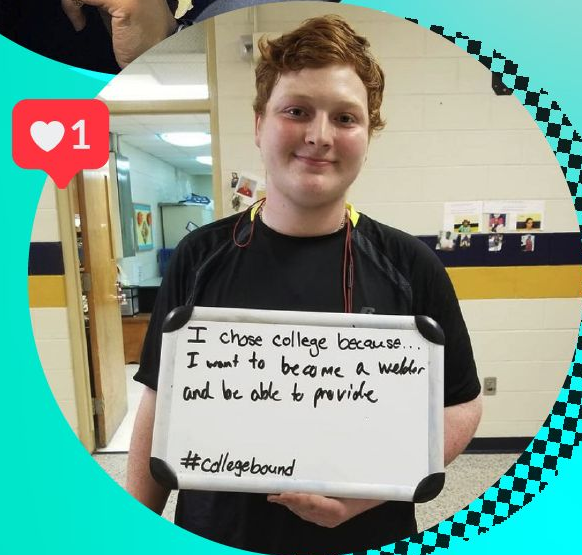
Encourage students to share photos of themselves wearing college gear and holding signs to celebrate the day. Post them on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok with the hashtags [#CollegeSigningDay](#) and [#BetterMakeRoom](#). Tag [@BetterMakeRoom](#) or [@ReachHigher](#) in your posts so that we can follow along with your celebrations!

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

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

Facebook: [Better Make Room](#) | [Reach Higher](#)

TikTok: [@BetterMakeRoom](#)

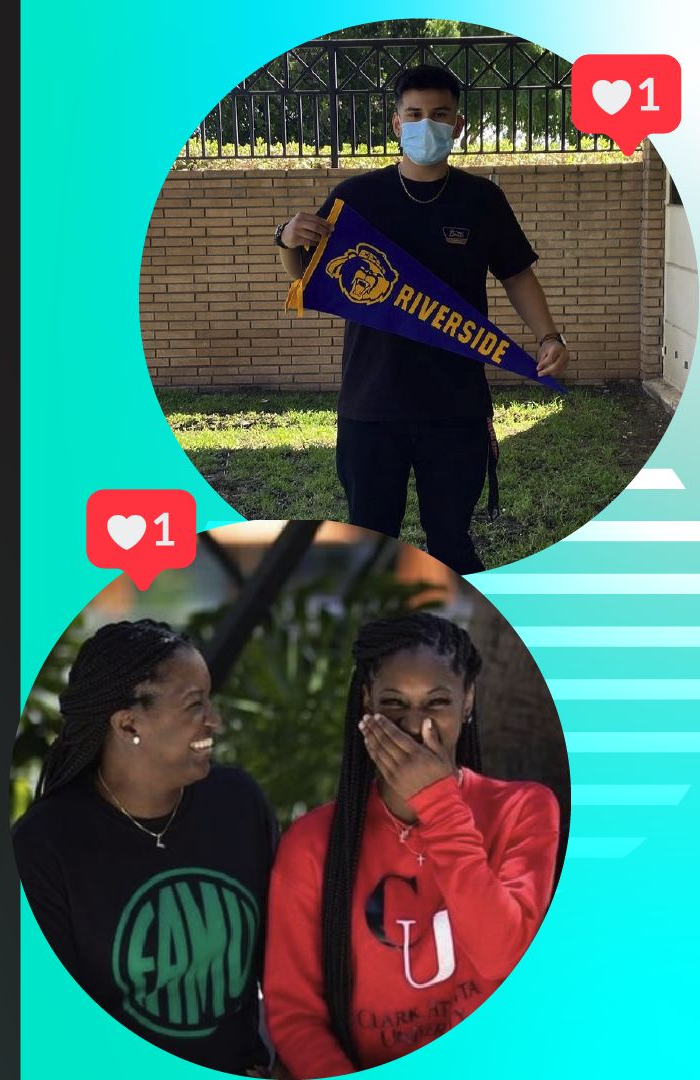


How to Celebrate In Person

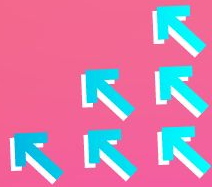
Let's celebrate College Signing Day safely!

Please make sure to follow your local COVID-19 guidelines to keep your staff and students safe.

You can host a variety of events that range from a College Signing Day Spirit Week, a Lip Dub challenge, or a Wall Of Honor for your students. We've created a list of resources to help you find the perfect way to celebrate College Signing Day! Be sure to register your event to get access.



Resources



Register your College Signing Day at BetterMakeRoom.org/CollegeSigningDay where we will be uploading social media guides, social media graphics, in-person accessories, and more!

Our CSD newsletter will send College Signing Day updates and behind-the-scenes looks from now until the end of May! Sign up to receive our CSD newsletters and be the first to know when we release new resources: bit.ly/CSD22Newsletter.



How to Celebrate with Elementary and Middle School Students

This is a great opportunity for college exploration!

→ Have a Career Day! Invite family or community members to come in to talk about their careers.

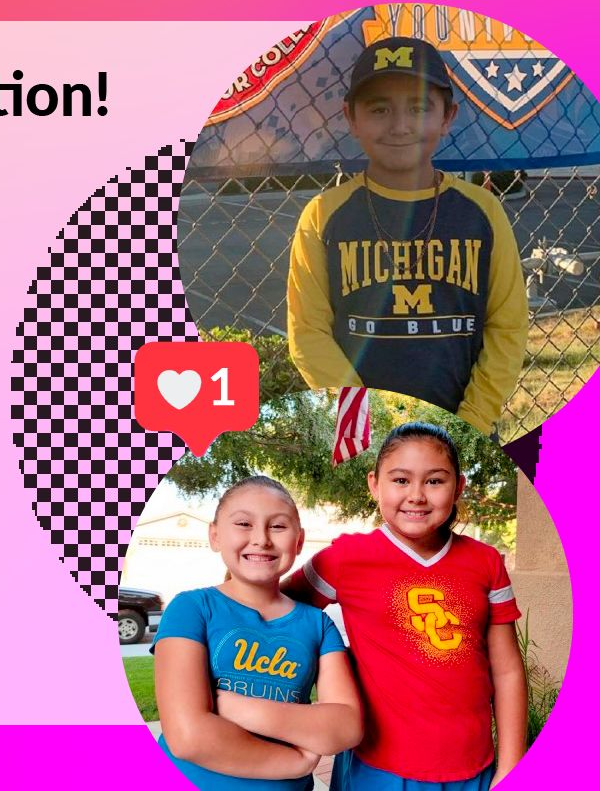
→ Share photos or drawings of students in a cap and gown with signs depicting what they want to be when they grow up.

→ Share information with families about exploring colleges online while at home.

→ Organize a college fair during virtual lunch or after school, if in person.

→ Invite alumni who are in college to speak to students about their experiences.

→ Design a virtual bulletin board with school staff photos and a map of where they attended college.



Need More Inspiration?

Celebrating College Signing Day is all about what works best for you and your community! There are so many ways to celebrate at little to no cost to you or your students.

You can host a safe in-person or virtual event where your students can write anonymous letters of advice to current juniors. The juniors can open the letters on the first day of their senior year! And a fun way to get everyone at school involved is having a College Signing Day Spirit Week. Each day is a different theme like "Class colors," "Future Career Day," and more!



What's Next?



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

1. Register your College Signing Day event at BetterMakeRoom.org/CollegeSigningDay.
2. Celebrate with your community on a day that works for you.
3. Share photos from your celebrations on social media throughout the month. Tag [@BetterMakeRoom](https://twitter.com/BetterMakeRoom) or [@ReachHigher](https://twitter.com/ReachHigher), and use [#CollegeSigningDay](https://twitter.com/CollegeSigningDay).
4. Email us if you have questions at info@BetterMakeRoom.org.



For Updates and More Information

#BetterMakeRoom

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

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

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