



College Signing Day Kit

Reach Higher + Better Make Room



REACH HIGHER

Reach Higher, an initiative started by Michelle Obama during her time at the White House, is centered around providing encouragement and activating educators, counselors and other adults to help young people see college as an option, whether at a traditional 4-year college, a 2-year community college or through an industry-recognized training program. Reach Higher focuses on four components: college affordability, exposing students to college, academic and summer planning and supporting school counselors.



Better Make Room is the student-facing campaign supporting Reach Higher, giving young people a space to declare their commitment to their future and engage with others. It's a peer-to-peer encouragement model that speaks to students in their own language—because they're the ones doing the talking. Better Make Room aims to elevate students to the level of celebrities and says to the world, "These young people are about to do something great. We Better Make Room."

Together, these initiatives create a community around higher education, giving everyone a chance to participate in a way that resonates with them.



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A Message from Mrs. Obama



“I am thrilled to know you are hosting a College Signing Day program in your community. These events offer a unique opportunity to celebrate graduating seniors, showcase our 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 because we wanted to recognize students and put them and their academic accomplishments first. One of my greatest joys is learning of these remarkable young people across the country who are taking charge of their future and committing to higher education.

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

[Watch the video online.](#)

The background is a solid yellow color with a repeating pattern of small, light-yellow circles. Several large, abstract blue shapes are scattered across the page. In the top left, there is a blue arrow pointing towards the center. In the top right, there is a large, irregular blue outline. In the bottom left, there is a blue shape that looks like a stylized leaf or a piece of a circle. In the bottom right, there is a long, thin blue line that curves upwards.

The College Challenge

The College Challenge

Education after high school is a critical part of a successful future. College graduates have more opportunities than those who do not choose to pursue education past high school. **In fact, according to Georgetown's Center on Education and Workforce, college graduates are projected to make 84% more over their lifetimes than those with only high school diplomas.**

That said, an education is worth much more than just a piece of paper—it's the most valuable asset a person can ever have. It is something they will have their entire life, helping them understand the world around them and giving them the tools they need to adapt to challenges and changes they encounter. Yet, many young people today aren't choosing to pursue higher education.

The College Challenge

America once led the world in college graduates, and we can do so again by getting two things right:

1. Supporting and encouraging students to realize that college is an option for them regardless of where they are from, how much money they have, or their parents' level of education.
2. Creating a framework for young people to commit to higher education, share their stories and inspire others to reach higher

Enter: College Signing Day

Championed by former First Lady Michelle Obama and hosted by schools, organizations, community leaders and influencers, College Signing Day is a chance to rally around students who have committed to higher education. Every student who commits to going to and completing college deserves to be celebrated just like a celebrity or star athlete. 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. The event is a way for educators, counselors and parents to encourage those heading to college, and while also being a way for students to inspire and encourage others.

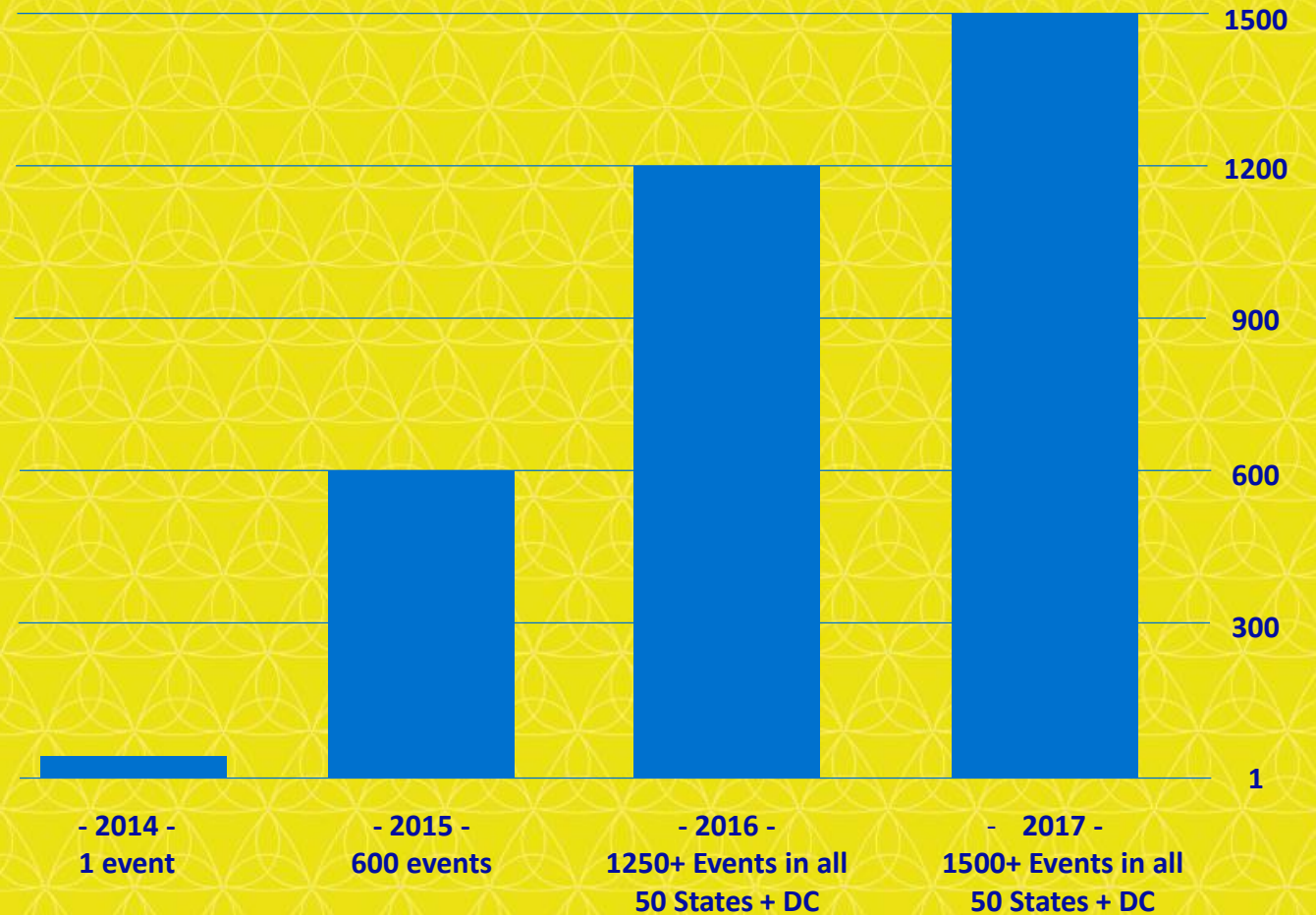
College Signing Day is May 1st, but can be celebrated any day in the spring that works best for your students.

Signing Day Success

Over the last four years, more and more schools and students have signed up to celebrate.

Want to get involved?

Our team has put together this toolkit to help you do just that.




Toolkit + Ready Resources

Our resources and ideas will make your job even easier.

On [BetterMakeRoom.org/college-signing-day/you'll find:](https://BetterMakeRoom.org/college-signing-day/you'll%20find%3A)

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

The background is a light blue grid. There are several decorative blue elements: a curved line in the top left, a solid blue heart shape in the top left, a large outlined shape in the top right, a solid blue shape with an outlined top in the bottom left, and a curved line in the bottom right.

Let's celebrate!

How to Celebrate College Signing Day

Host a College Signing Day Event.



Register your event at BetterMakeRoom.org!

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



Download the guide on BetterMakeRoom.org

Get the basic details in place: things like date, location, time, invitation list, etc.



Create an event planner list.

Who should be involved in planning your event? Include teachers, counselors and other passionate faculty in the planning, but get students involved in the process, too! They know how to best inspire and engage their peers, so here's an opportunity to create a student planning committee.



Set the date.

College Signing Day is May 1st, the deadline for most students to make their college decisions. You are invited to celebrate at a time that is best for your schedules. That could be anywhere from between mid-April to early June, keeping in mind end-of-year exams, graduation activities and other events for students.

How to Fund the Event

How do we fund our event?

The first way is on DonorsChoose.org. Thanks to the College Football Playoff Foundation, we have the ability to provide school counselors, teachers and faculty members at public schools the opportunity to apply for a \$500 grant toward your College Signing Day event! The money can be used to buy supplies from a list of over [20 approved vendors](#) on DonorsChoose.org.



COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF
FOUNDATION

How to Apply for Funds

To apply for funding, follow these steps:

1. Register your event on <https://www.bettermakerroom.org/college-signing-day/>
2. Go to www.donorschoose.org/teachers and create a school counselor or teacher account. Account holders must be current educators at a public 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 use to purchase materials for your College Signing Day event.
4. Once your project has been screened by the DonorsChoose.org team, you will be notified with next steps!
5. Once DonorsChoose.org approves your project, email reachhigher@civcnation.org with the link to your project.

How to Raise Funds

How do we fund our event? (Continued)

In addition to the \$500 grant, you may want additional sponsorships from the community.

- ❑ Community partners can provide monetary donations, materials or services. Find a sponsorship outreach letter template on BetterMakeRoom.org that you can download and customize to ask local businesses and corporations to sponsor your College Signing Day.
- ❑ Also find a link to our Zazzle store at BetterMakeRoom.org where you can purchase official College Signing Day swag like t-shirts, buttons and stickers for the students!



How to Pick the Venue

Where should we host our event?

You don't need a fancy auditorium or professional sports team to make College Signing Day unforgettable. Host one at your school gym, the school district's football field, a cafeteria or a local community center. We've seen photos of celebrations in classrooms, courtyards and shopping malls. Get creative!!



How to Invite VIPs and Guests

Who should we invite to our event?

It's all about putting the spotlight on students, and we know there are plenty of supporters who will want to celebrate them!

- Parents, teachers, counselors, administrators
- Local government officials, like your school superintendent, the mayor, city council members and state representatives
- Local celebrities or people of influence, like professional athletes, coaches of the local college teams and radio personalities
- Local media, specifically reporters from your major newspaper or television news teams

We provide a template invitation on [BetterMakeRoom.org](https://www.bettermakerroom.org), but feel free to create your own!

How to Celebrate Students

What should we do at our event?

CELEBRATE! Get those students excited. Treat the event like a pep rally all for them.

Ask the students to wear a t-shirt from their new college to show off their decision. Ask your guests and colleagues to do the same (whether it's the college they attended or just one whose sports team they favor).

Everyone decked out in their college shirts will make for a great photo opportunity, so have your cameras ready! Ask your school art department to make a backdrop or props for fun photos. We'll provide signs at BetterMakeRoom.org that you can download, print and decorate.



How to Celebrate on Social Media

What should we share on social media?

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

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



How to Celebrate in Elementary and Middle Schools

This is a great opportunity to promote college exploration!

1. Design a “Commitment to My Future” pledge for students to include actions that will keep them on the path to college
2. Coordinate a college field trip for students and families
3. Host a family college night with information about early ways to prepare for college
4. Take photos of students in a cap and gown with signs of what they want to be when they grow up
5. Teach a college exploration classroom including students researching colleges they are interested in attending (middle school)
6. Organize a student-led college fair
7. Host a college student to speak about their path to college during an assembly
8. Design a bulletin board with school staff photos and a map of where they attended college
9. Read students “Mahalia Mouse Goes to College” by John Lithgow (elementary)
10. Host a door decorating contest for classrooms to assign college themes on their classroom doors
11. Teach students college chants and perform them together at an assembly



What's Next?

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

1. Plan your College Signing Day event.
2. Register your event at BetterMakeRoom.org.
3. Involve your students in the final planning.
4. Email us if you have questions at reachhigher@civication.org.
5. Share photos from your celebration on Twitter and Instagram, and tag Reach Higher and Better Make Room!



For Updates and More Information

BetterMakeRoom.org

Twitter: @ReachHigher, @BetterMakeRoom

Instagram: @ReachHigher2020, @BetterMakeRoom

Facebook.com/BetterMakeRoom/

Email: reachhigher@civcnation.org

#BetterMakeRoom | #ReachHigher | #CollegeSigningDay

