

REACH HIGHER

# College Signing Day Toolkit



REACH HIGHER



Updated March 16, 2020



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 celebrating College Signing Day. These events offer a unique opportunity to recognize 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 recognition a success. I wish you the very best for a wonderful celebration.

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



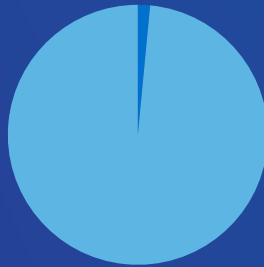
# The College Challenge

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

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

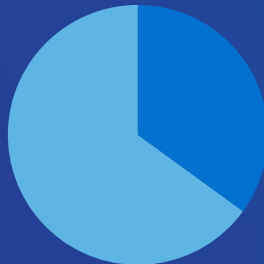
**MORE THAN 99%**

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 students plan to attend a community college, a university, a certification program, the military, or any other education past high school, College Signing Day shows support for their decisions for the future.

College Signing Day is usually recognized every year on May 1<sup>st</sup>, but it 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 1<sup>st</sup>. You should celebrate on a date that works best for your community and your students, especially online.

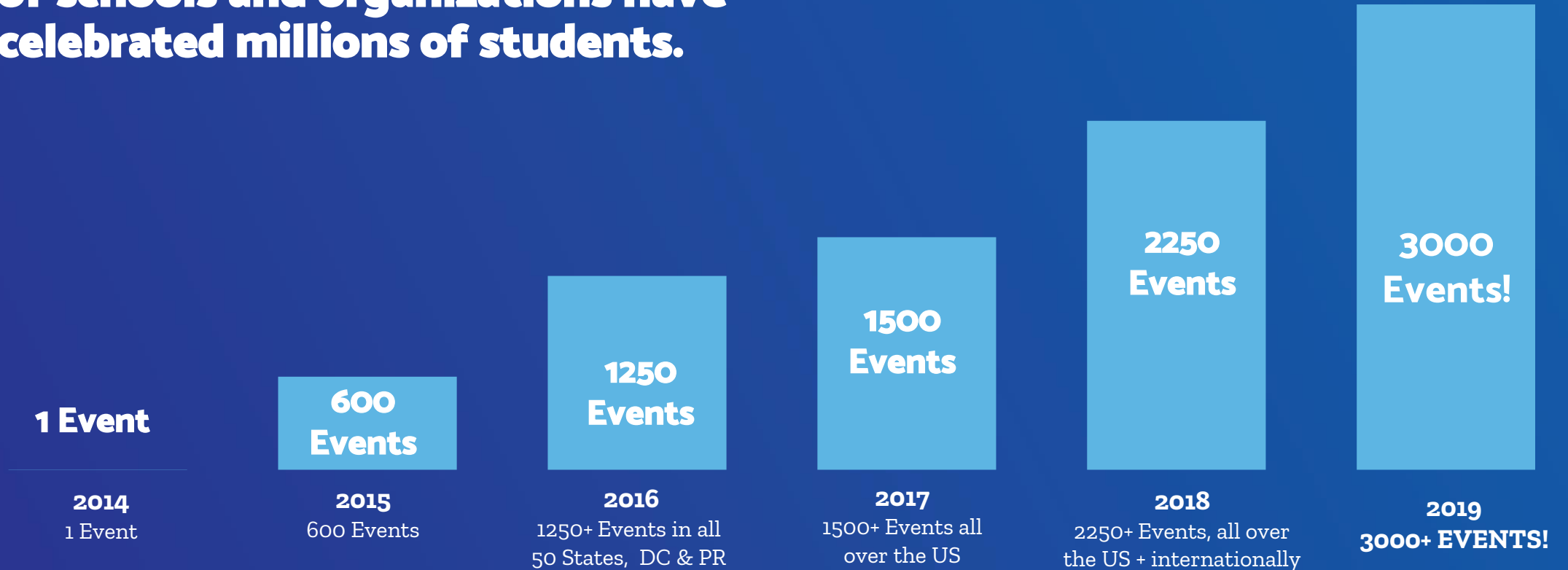
- **Reach Higher was launched at a College Signing Day event in San Antonio, Texas in 2014.**

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.**



# 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 that you're going to celebrate, including online!

➤ **Download the guides.**  
Use our templates to help you plan the details, especially the social media guide.

➤ **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 on May 1<sup>st</sup> and throughout the month as students make their commitments.

➤ **Celebrate!**  
Share your excitement on social media with #CollegeSigningDay and #BetterMakeRoom

The image displays two overlapping screenshots of the BetterMakeRoom.org/collegesigningday website. The top screenshot shows the homepage with a navigation bar including links for 'OUR STORY', 'SIGNING DAY', 'UP NEXT', 'TOOLS', 'GET INVOLVED', 'VIDEOS', 'OUR TEAM', 'PARTNERS', and 'DONATE'. A large banner features a woman celebrating with her arms raised. Below the banner, the text 'SIGNING DAY' is prominently displayed. The bottom screenshot shows the 'REGISTER YOUR EVENT BELOW!' section, which includes a scroll prompt and a button to 'DOWNLOAD THE COLLEGE SIGNING DAY TOOLKIT'. Below this, there is a registration form with fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email Address', 'Date of Signing Day Event', 'Event City', 'Event State', and 'Point of Contact Name'. A checkbox for 'I believe in my students and their future.' is also present.



# How to Host a Digital College Signing Day

**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 Snapchat with the hashtags **#CollegeSigningDay** and **#BetterMakeRoom**. Tag us in your posts so that everyone can follow along with your celebrations!

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.

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

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

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





# How to Celebrate on Social Media

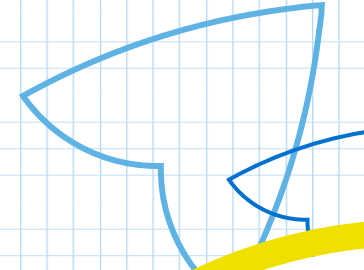
**Can't host an in-person event? Here's how you can also celebrate College Signing Day online.**

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

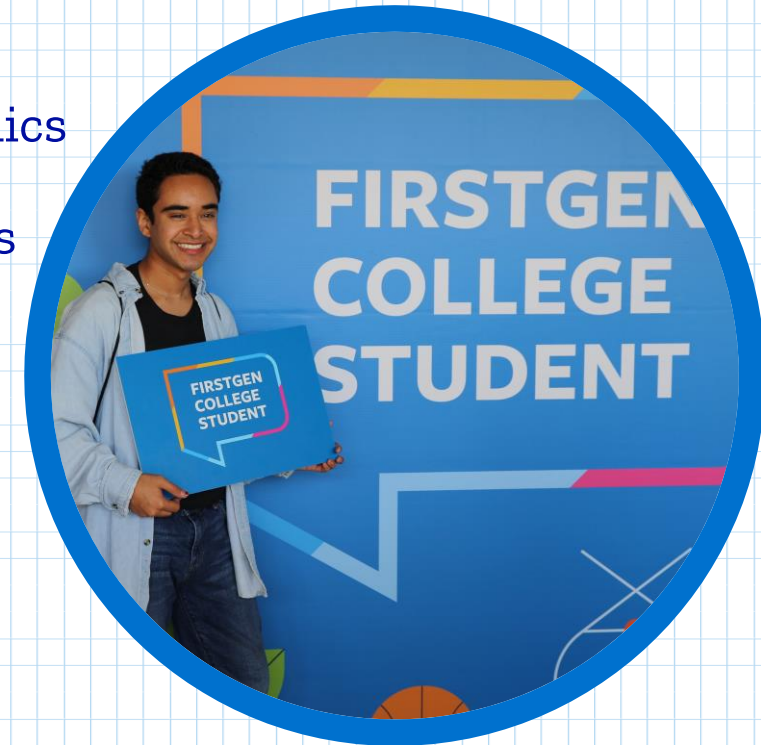
Future members of [#RetrieverNation](#) - one of your first orders of business when you get here will be to stock up on as much black & gold as you can carry. Thanks to our friends at [@umbcbookstore](#) for welcoming AND modeling 🧡🖤! [#CollegeSigningDay](#)



# Toolkit + Resources

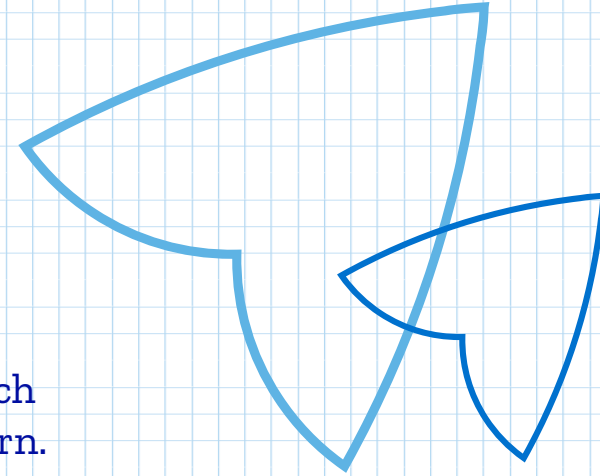
The resources and ideas on [BetterMakeRoom.org/collegesigningday](https://BetterMakeRoom.org/collegesigningday) will help you plan your College Signing Day event. You can share these resources with your students, too.

- Event Cards
- Hashtag Signs
- #CollegeSigningDay Gear
- Social Media Guide
  - Social Profile Graphics
  - Social Post Graphics



# How to Celebrate with Elementary and Middle School Students

**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.
- 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 lunch or after school once students return.
- Invite alumni who are in college to speak to students about their experiences.
- Design a bulletin board with school staff photos and a map of where they attended college .

# 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

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](https://BetterMakeRoom.org).
2. Celebrate with your community on a day that works best for you.
3. Share photos from your celebrations on social media, especially on May 1<sup>st</sup> and throughout the month. Tag @BetterMakeRoom and @ReachHigher, and use #CollegeSigningDay!
4. Email us if you have questions at [info@reachhigher.org](mailto:info@reachhigher.org).





# For Updates and More Information

[BetterMakeRoom.org](http://BetterMakeRoom.org) | [ReachHigher.org](http://ReachHigher.org)



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



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Email: [info@reachhigher.org](mailto:info@reachhigher.org)

#BetterMakeRoom | #ReachHigher | #CollegeSigningDay



REACH HIGHER

BETTER  
MAKE ROOM

