

WHY JOIN THE AMERICAN COLLEGE APPLICATION CAMPAIGN?

➔ REMOVE THE BARRIERS

The American College Application Campaign® (ACAC) is a national effort of ACT’s Center for Impact and Learning to increase the number of first-generation students and students from low-income families who pursue a postsecondary education. By removing the barriers that often prevent these students from applying to a postsecondary institution, ACAC ensures that all high school seniors complete at least one college application. To achieve this success, state leaders, school staff, and community members provide students with individualized support and assistance as they prepare for and complete the college application process.

ACAC has seen a meteoric rise in participation and impact since it began in a single North Carolina high school in **2005**.



2005



Launched the ACAC School of Excellence Awards as an annual opportunity to lift up and highlight exemplary high schools for their work in helping students pursue postsecondary success. Twenty-one high schools received the award in its first year.

2014

By fall **2014**, it reached a tipping point, expanding to all 50 states and the District of Columbia to include more than **4,100** high schools and almost **265,000** high school seniors, generating approximately **411,000** college applications.

2019



2025

During the **2025** implementation, over **9,921** high schools hosted programs with approximately **1.95 million** seniors submitting more than **2.6 million** applications.



JUMP INTO THE CAMPAIGN

The ACAC strategy employed by education leaders representing nearly every state and the District of Columbia, and the thousands of high schools that host college application events annually is intended to enhance and expand current college-going culture efforts, not replace them. Even schools that have implemented some approach to supporting the college application process are jumping into the campaign and here's why:

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

This is more than a senior-year event at a participating school. This is a school-wide, a community-wide, a state-wide, and nation-wide movement. Together, we can elevate all of our student-focused efforts and shine a light on the important work all of us do to achieve a common goal.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

By working across schools, across communities, and across state lines, we can more successfully impact who pursues education and training beyond high school. Moreover, with annual proclamations from governors, the President and Congress, a spotlight continues to be shone on the need to address barriers faced by students in the college application process.

NAVIGATION

Many students find the college-going process stressful, overwhelming, or confusing and don't know how to ask for help. ACAC events take place during the school day with trusted adults to help students break down the steps for applying to college and guide them along the way. The Campaign celebrates students, acknowledging their efforts as they complete the often complicated process of applying.

A NETWORK OF PEERS

The national and state-level college application campaigns comprise engaged, creative, and committed educators. Joining this network allows all participating schools to share what works and to learn from others for continuous improvement in service delivery. Each year, new best practices from recognized School of Excellence awardees are shared throughout the network.

LEADERSHIP

If your school is already implementing an approach to support students through the college application process, ACAC and your state's college application program not only provide a platform to elevate your good work, but also provide a platform to serve as a leader in this work and share your efforts with others who can learn from your success.

