

IMPACT AND GIVING REPORT



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WELCOME

At ACT, our unrelenting commitment to learners' educational and workplace success drives us every day. We know that opportunity is not defined by a single test or score; it is about equipping students with the tools and confidence to pursue the pathway that is right for them.

Operating as a public benefit company, we are committed to breaking down barriers so that all learners can access these opportunities. Through initiatives like our American College Application Campaign, ACT Fee Waiver Program, ACT Scholars, and ACT Giving, we create multiple pathways for success and open doors for students who might otherwise face significant obstacles.

Our mission and **North Star** continue to guide us. And in that spirit, I am proud to present the ACT Impact and Giving

Report for fiscal year 2025, encompassing our efforts from September 2024 through August 2025. In that time, we have served 477,712 high school students through the American College Application Campaign, 210,810 learners through our Fee Waiver Program, provided direct scholarships to 27 individuals, and disbursed grants to 54 organizations across the United States through the ACT Giving Program.

This has been an exciting year, and we hope you feel and see the impact and possibility of these programs in the pages of this report. It has been an honor to serve thousands of aspiring learners as they strive to achieve their dreams.



Tina Gridiron
Chief Impact and Learning Officer, ACT



ACT IMPACT AT A GLANCE

SEPTEMBER 2024-AUGUST 2025

ACT served 1,945,325 learners through our tools and solutions equipping students, workers, and learners with the confidence to pursue the pathway that is right for them.

In FY25, ACT amplified our commitment to students, workers, and learners. Highlights of our FY25 impact include:



477,712

students supported
through the American College
Application Campaign



210,810

high school students
served through our
Fee Waiver Program



27

direct college
scholarships



54

organizations across the
United States funded through
the ACT Giving Program

AMERICAN COLLEGE APPLICATION CAMPAIGN

SENIOR YEAR APPLICATION SUPPORT

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC) is a cornerstone of ACT's Center for Impact and Learning (Center). ACAC is a nationwide initiative dedicated to empowering first-generation college students and those from under-resourced communities to pursue higher education. By fostering a powerful network of educators, policy makers, and advocates, ACAC provides ACT with a vital platform to share insights, build key relationships, and lead the charge in expanding college and career aspirations across the U.S. Our mission is to make college access and success a reality for all students.

Every year, ACAC works with coordinators in nearly every state and the District of Columbia to host college application events. The goal of these events is to guide students through

completing and submitting at least one college application. Building on this core mission, some host sites may leverage their unique resources to create additional opportunities for students to explore their futures through career days and fairs, collegiate tailgates, financial aid workshops, and college campus tours.

The numbers speak for themselves. During the 2024 campaign season, **5,854 high schools** hosted a College Application Campaign event that helped **477,712 high school seniors** submit over 1.3 million applications. Since its launch in 2005, ACAC has served over 5.17 million students, who have submitted a staggering **10 million college applications**.



ACAC'S 2025 ANNUAL GATHERING OF STATE CAMPAIGN COORDINATORS

NATIONAL 2024 DATA RESULTS



5,854

HOST SITES



477,712

**PARTICIPATING
STUDENTS**

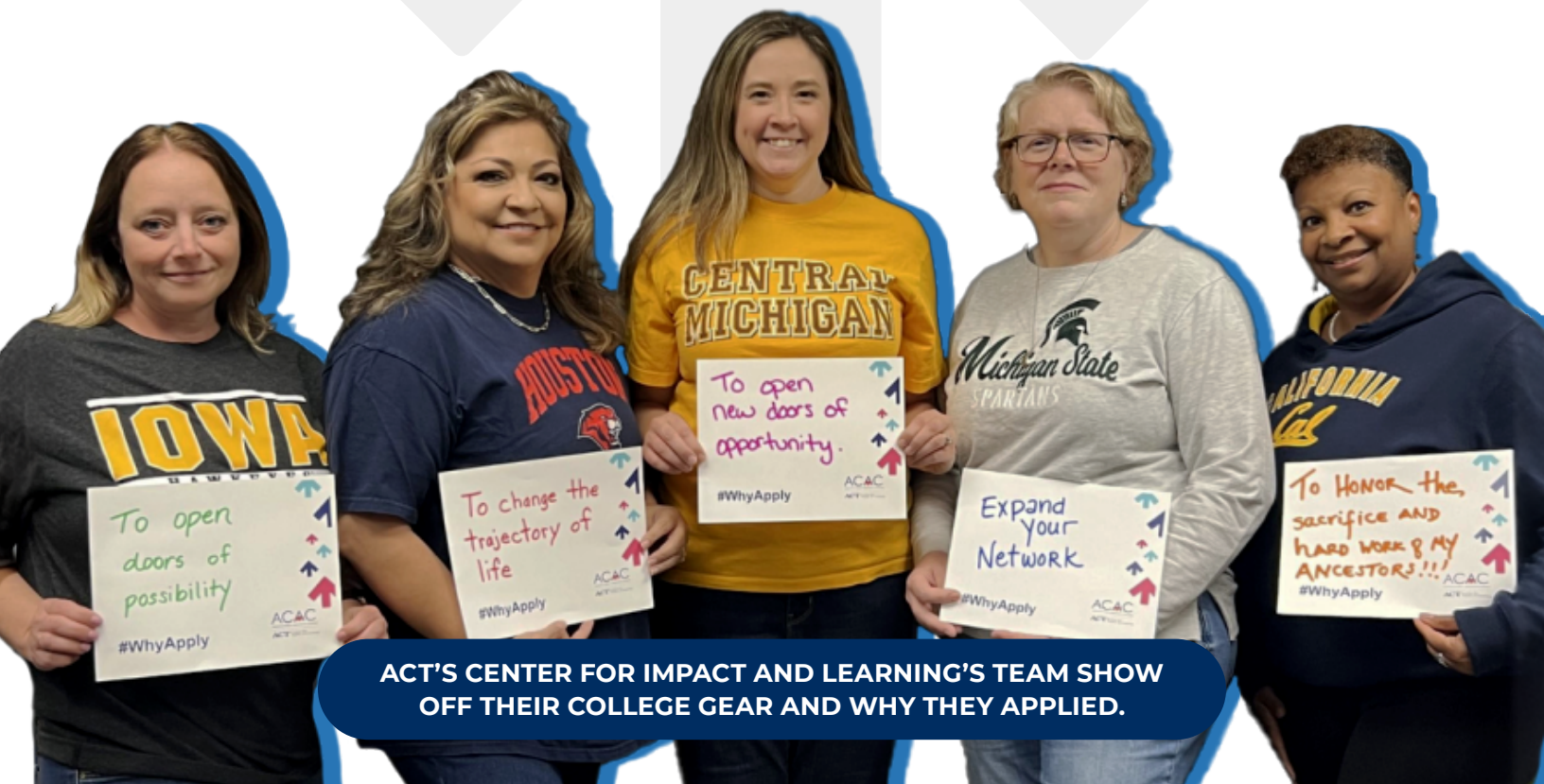


1,316,688

**SUBMITTED
APPLICATIONS**

ACAC kicked off the application season in September 2024 with **#WhyApply Day**, a social media campaign to celebrate and encourage students on their college journey. Through inspiring messages from students, school staff, families, and higher

education advocates, **#WhyApply Day** reached over **278,000 people**, illuminating the transformative power of a college education and motivating those still considering their postsecondary options.



**ACT'S CENTER FOR IMPACT AND LEARNING'S TEAM SHOW
OFF THEIR COLLEGE GEAR AND WHY THEY APPLIED.**

2024 SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

For the sixth year in a row, ACAC selected 26 School of Excellence awardees who demonstrate commitment to student success and are key contributors in helping ACAC fulfill its mission. ACAC named the awardees based on their demonstrated commitment to student success and for serving as exemplary models for their state's college application campaign.

Applying for college can be one of the most intimidating parts of a student's high school

education. The schools recognized this year were disciplined and intentional when working with high school seniors to help them better understand the college admission process.

They developed and hosted a series of weeklong or monthlong events, ultimately empowering thousands of high school students to complete a college application.

“There’s something that’s so rewarding about seeing our state coordinators take part in helping students navigate the admission process,” ACAC Senior Director Lisa Sommer King said. “Students feel more confident and empowered to apply to college, and thanks to initiatives like the American College Application Campaign, it all serves as a reminder of the impact we can have.”



GLASGOW HIGH SCHOOL
NEWARK, DELAWARE



SHOALS HIGH SCHOOL
SHOALS, INDIANA



OTTUMWA HIGH SCHOOL ACCEPTS THE 2024 ACAC SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD
OTTUMWA, IOWA



OTTUMWA HIGH SCHOOL
OTTUMWA, IOWA



SUTHERLIN HIGH SCHOOL
SUTHERLIN, OREGON



SOUTHEASTERN HIGH SCHOOL
DETROIT, MI

COLLEGE MATCH DAY FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC) has continued its pilot program, **College Match Day**, for a second year with generous support from The Kresge Foundation. The initiative enhances current ACAC senior-year strategies with new and innovative support for high school juniors.

The College Match Day program's key goals are to:

- **Build Foundational Knowledge:** Guide high school juniors in creating balanced college lists and understand the concept of “match and fit.”
- **Increase Accessibility:** Hold in-school activities to make the college exploration process more accessible for all students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, including low-income families, students of color, or first-generation collegegoers.
- **Promote Informed Decisions:** Equip students with the tools and knowledge to explore postsecondary options that align with their interests, goals, and learning styles.
- **Boost Confidence:** Empower students to enter their senior year college application season with confidence and direction by starting the preparation process early.

During its second pilot year of 2024-2025, the program expanded its reach, inviting 21 schools to participate, with 17 ultimately joining the effort. These schools represented a diverse mix of eight urban, five suburban, and eight rural schools across states including California, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee. This pilot effort served approximately 3,300 students, connecting them to 6,900 colleges, who created college lists with an average of three schools on each list.

In a highlight of the year, ACAC Senior Director Lisa Sommer King visited Augusta Independent School in Augusta, Kentucky, to participate in its College Match Day event in late April 2025. As one of 17 high schools nationwide piloting the initiative for the second consecutive year, Augusta provides a powerful example of how a holistic campaign can make a difference for students as they navigate options for life after high school.



ACT FEE WAIVER PROGRAM

Preparing for college requires significant time, effort, and financial resources that may not be available to all students and families. To help address financial barriers to college access, the **ACT Fee Waiver Program** supports learners by covering the cost of the ACT test.

For more than 30 years, this program has provided support to eligible high school juniors and seniors, including those in the foster care system, Upward Bound participants, and students affiliated with other qualifying

nonprofit organizations. By eliminating the financial obstacle of registering for an ACT National test date, we help students to focus on what matters most: completing their college applications, pursuing scholarships, and taking concrete steps toward their education and career goals.

ACT is proud to stand alongside aspiring students, helping them unlock opportunities and realize their full potential.

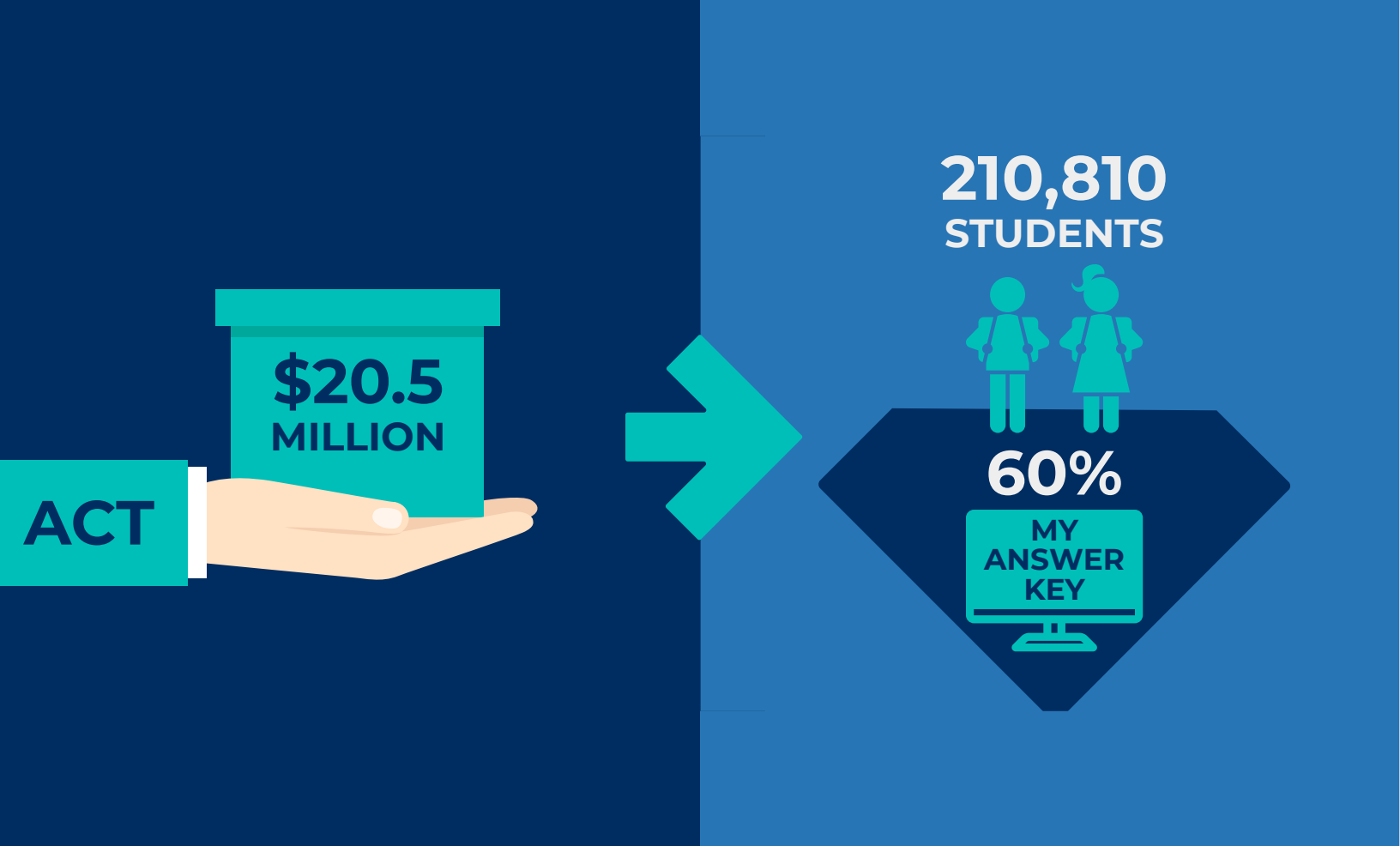
STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

“It meant that I had a great opportunity and that my education was valued by not only myself but by my school and the ACT itself.”

2022 ACT Test Taker

“It meant a lot. I wasn’t comfortable with my score after the first test – I knew I could do better. The fee waiver provided me the chance to improve my score, which led to additional scholarship funds and acceptance into the university of my choice.”

2003 ACT Test Taker



TODAY'S IMPACT

In 2025, ACT set aside more than **\$20.5 million** to support the ACT Fee Waiver Program, allowing more than **210,810 students** to register for the ACT National test at no charge. In addition to registering for a free National test via the ACT Fee Waiver Program, more than **60%** of those who took the ACT National test

after registering with a Fee Waiver also accessed their ACT My Answer Key. Also, more than **143,206 students** gained access to a free version of The Official ACT Self-Paced Course, Powered by Kaplan, as part of the Fee Waiver Program.

Fee Waiver Eligibility Requirements

[Click here](#) for more information and to learn about eligibility requirements for the ACT fee waiver program.



ACT Fee Waiver Testers: Average Score Across the Country

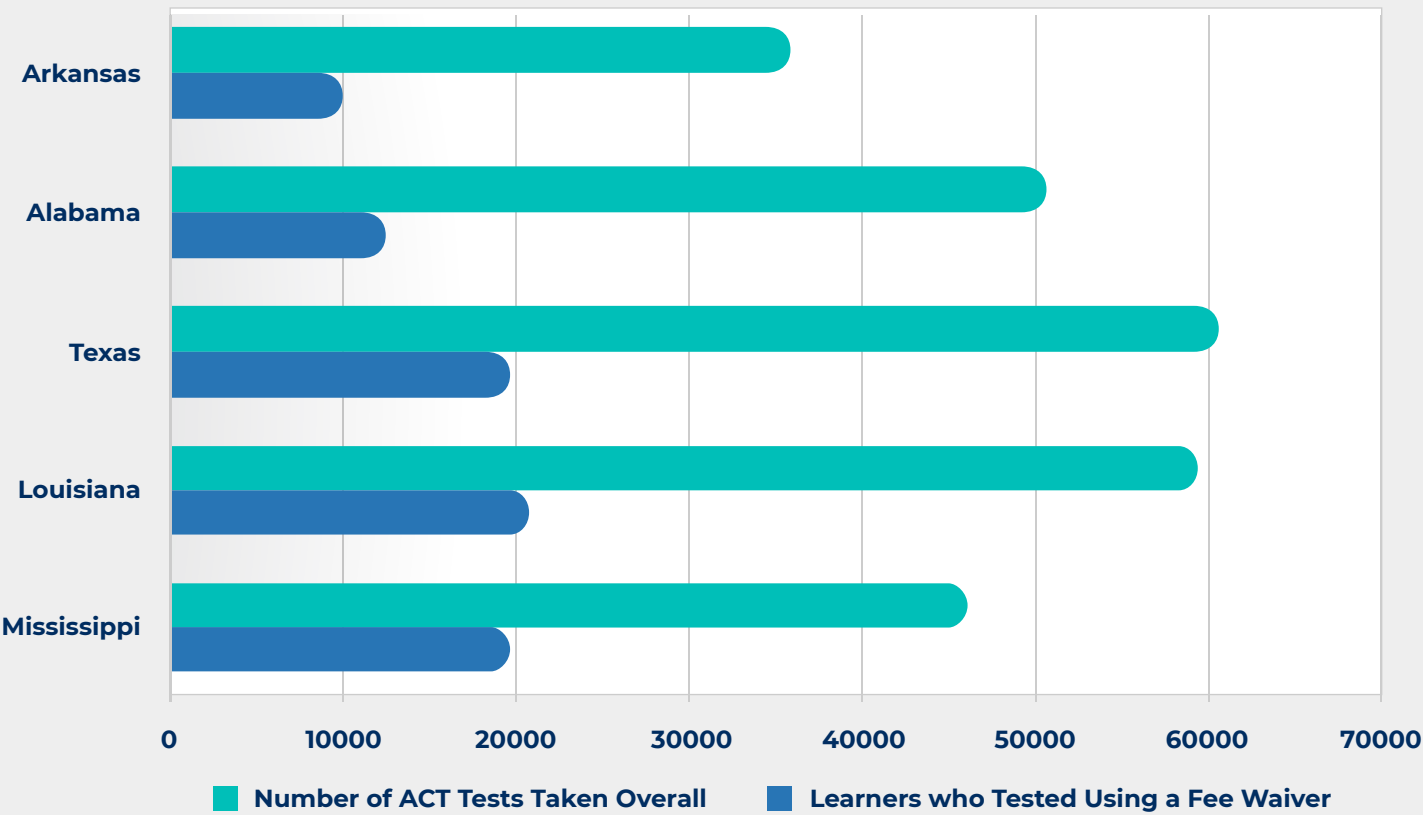
Among students who used an ACT fee waiver, the average composite score is 19, a benchmark that reflects the academic performance of learners who are pursuing postsecondary education. With an ACT test score of 19, students may qualify for admission to a range of regional public universities and community colleges, meet minimum requirements for military enlistment, and be eligible for merit-based scholarships. This score also signals

college readiness in key subject areas and can serve as a strong foundation to support a student’s application. More importantly, this data points to the critical role fee waivers play in promoting access and opportunity—empowering thousands of students to take a meaningful step toward postsecondary education.

From Registration to Results: ACT’s Reach Across States

Southern states demonstrate strong engagement with the ACT Fee Waiver Program. These states stand out as having the highest conversation rate, which indicates effective follow-through strategies that could serve as a model for other states to improve test participation among fee waiver recipients.

Top 5 States Driving ACT Fee Waiver Success Through High Test Completion



The Power and Promise of ACT's Fee Waiver Program

Josef Hobdy currently serves as director of physician practice operations at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. In fall 2025, he will begin pursuing a doctorate in health administration at the Medical University of South Carolina. He credits the ACT fee waiver with significantly

shaping his postsecondary journey, easing financial stress, reducing the burden on his parents, and allowing him to focus entirely on preparing for the exam.

“I would share with other students that there is no reason to be hesitant. These resources are available for a reason, and using resources provided to you is how you can make it in life.”

Josef Hobdy, 2009 Test Taker





Dr. Trevor McCray currently serves as a program director in ACT's Center for Impact and Learning. A three-time graduate, holding a bachelor's, master's, and doctorate, he is a published critical scholar and a passionate advocate for education. With nearly nine years of experience across K-12 and higher education, Dr. McCray brings a deep commitment to

access and student success. Fourteen years ago, the ACT Fee Waiver Program played a pivotal role in his journey, opening doors he never imagined and offering a glimpse into a world that once felt out of reach growing up in North Baton Rouge.

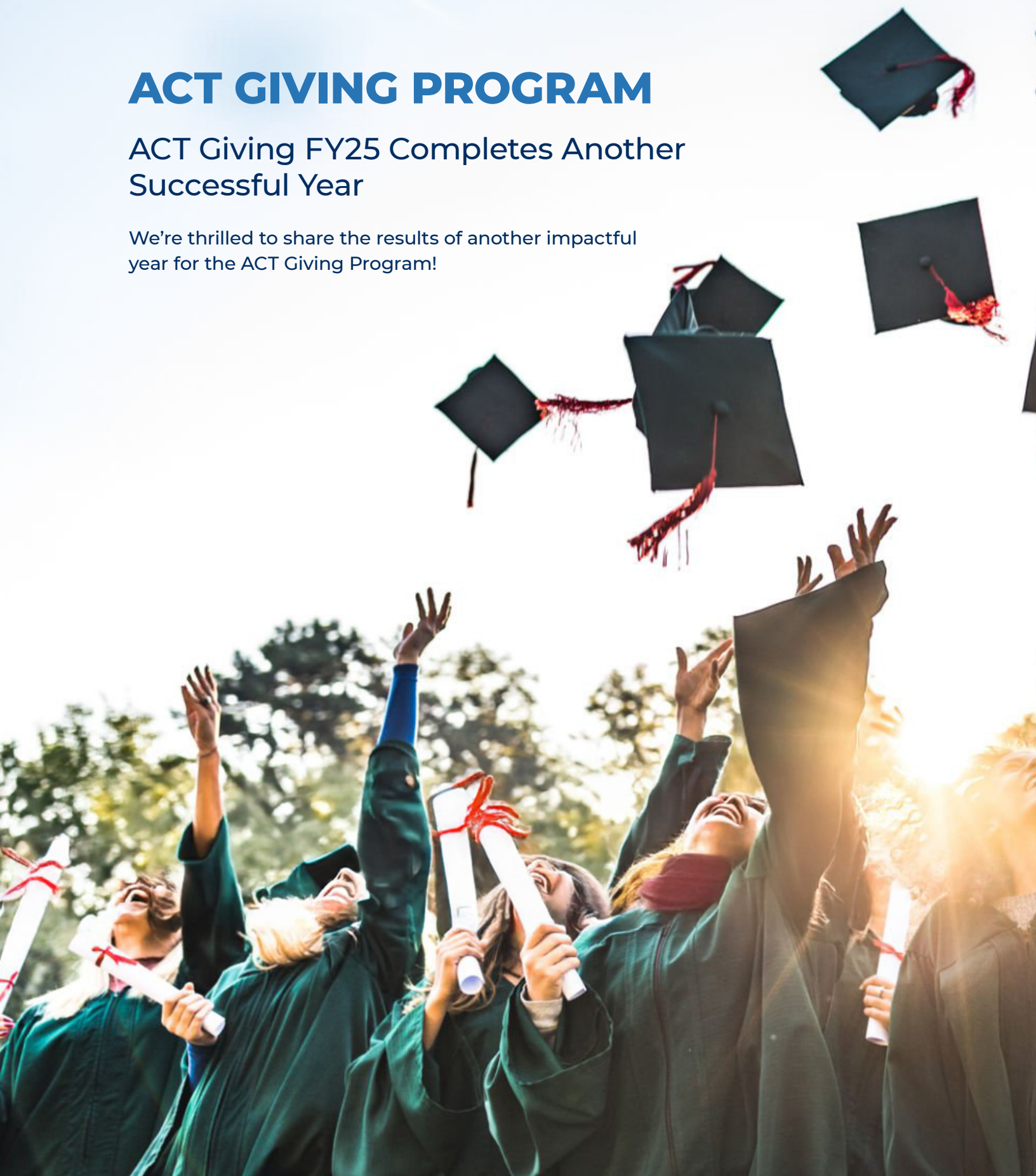
“The ACT fee waiver shaped my future opportunities by allowing me to find my purpose and passion. Being able to be a champion of education and change the narrative of Black men in education was possible with the opportunity to pursue college. I remember the 17-year-old, not sure what life would be after high school or if I was interested in college, but leaning in and giving it a shot blessed me with a career that allows me to give back and advocate for all learners, specifically learners who have historically been silenced.”

Dr. Trevor McCray, 2012 Test Taker

ACT GIVING PROGRAM

ACT Giving FY25 Completes Another Successful Year

We're thrilled to share the results of another impactful year for the ACT Giving Program!



A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

This year, the ACT Giving Committee received an unprecedented 163 proposals — the highest in our history. After thoughtful review, we proudly funded 54 nonprofit organizations whose work aligns with ACT's three giving priorities:



Education and Workforce



Human and Social Needs



Community Betterment

54

Applications
Funded

17

States
Represented

\$2,360

Average
Grant Size

\$500-\$5,000

Grant
Range

28 (52%)

Iowa-Based
Grants

26 (48%)

Grants from
Other States

Want to see the impact firsthand? Check out stories from some of our grantees: <https://impactandlearning.act.org/giving>

2025 Grantee Samples

Iowa City Public Library Summer Reading Program

FY25 Grantee

Iowa City, Iowa

Iowa City Public Library's Summer Reading Program encourages reading for all ages and abilities, babies through adults, during the summer months when school is not in session. Iowa City Public Library Summer Reading Program participants are asked to track their reading progress either through a game card

or through an online system called Beanstack, and when they reach certain milestones, the library offers prizes and awards. All library patrons, regardless of age or neurodiversity, can participate in the Summer Reading Programs.

"We are deeply grateful to ACT for this generous grant, which will help us create a summer full of stories, discovery, and learning for readers of all ages. With this support, we can provide engaging programs and resources that encourage a lifelong love of reading in our community." Said Angela Pilkington, children's services coordinator at the Iowa City Public Library. She went on to say, "Thanks to ACT's Giving Program, our Summer Reading Program will continue to inspire and empower readers of all ages. This investment in literacy helps us build a stronger, more connected community — one book at a time."

According to Scholastic, 83% of educators say reading helps students understand people that are different than them. By fostering an environment where everyone feels welcome, libraries develop varied collections, and through the free Summer Reading Program, participants are encouraged to explore other perspectives and stories in their reading list, promoting empathy and self-discovery. In addition, reading is essential in school achievement, lifelong reading is important not just to postsecondary success in college and career, but also in improving the quality of life for both individual citizens and our democracy.



Indian Creek Nature Center

FY25 Grantee

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Indian Creek Nature Center (ICNC) works to promote a sustainable future by nurturing individuals through environmental education, providing leadership in land protection and restoration, and encouraging responsible interaction with nature in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This past year, ICNC deepened its commitment to accessibility by updating its website to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards

and launching an online advance registration system to expand access to a new fleet of three all-terrain wheelchairs. These chairs are available free of charge to visitors with temporary or permanent mobility impairments, ensuring that more people can experience the healing and wonder of nature, regardless of physical ability.

“Thanks to funding from ACT, Indian Creek Nature Center is breaking down barriers to nature — enhancing website accessibility and providing all-terrain wheelchairs so that everyone, regardless of mobility, can explore and connect with the outdoors,” said Sarah Halbrook, director of development and marketing at ICNC.

ACT funded this grant through our ‘Community Betterment’ priority because the ICNC is ensuring access to nature has a few barriers as possible and these changes will have a positive daily impact for community members, both online and in person. ICNC continues to make strives to make its programs accessible to all.



ACT SCHOLARS

More than 15 years ago, as part of ACT's 50th anniversary celebration, ACT established the ACT Scholars Program, a pair of endowments to nurture the academic talent of graduate and community college students at the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College. These two institutions share ACT's passion for helping all students achieve their ambitions in college and their careers. ACT emphasized scholarships for students experiencing significant financial barriers to college access and success.

From their inspiring stories, it's clear that ACT's \$7 million investment (\$5 million to the University of Iowa and \$2 million to Kirkwood Community College) has enriched the college experience for hundreds of ACT Scholars.

To date, 222 students have received an ACT scholarship, 39 at the University of Iowa and 183 at Kirkwood Community College.

For ACT Scholar Mohanad Elaagip, a lifelong interest in electronics sparked a dream of building a career in technology. Now a student at Kirkwood Community College, he is turning that passion into a purpose despite the unique challenges of being an international student. With support from the ACT Scholar program, Mohanad is focused on his future and committed to making the most of his college experience.

Hear Mohanad's story and what keeps him motivated [in the video](#).

“With this support, my parents no longer have to stress over my educational expenses and can instead focus their resources and energy on providing for my siblings. This opportunity brings with it immense relief and allows me to fully dedicate myself to my studies without the constant worry of financial strain.

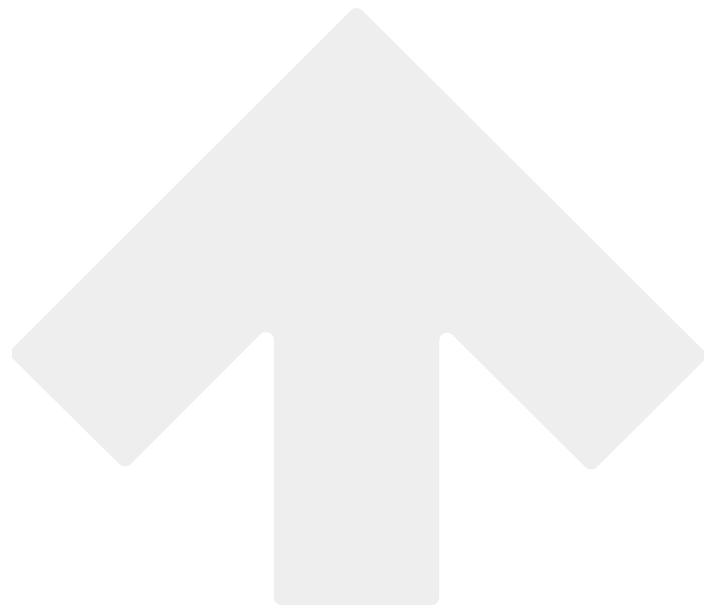


For Elysia Severson, a first-year student at Kirkwood Community College pursuing an associate's degree in accounting, attending college is about more than earning a degree — it's a tribute to her sisters who never had the chance to pursue higher education. Elysia has faced challenges, including managing her disabilities while balancing coursework. Still, with determination and inspiration from her teachers, she is forging a path to graduation and a career in accounting.

Watch Elysia's story to hear her reflections on resilience, the impact of scholarships, and her advice for fellow students [in the video](#).



“This scholarship means everything to me. Without it I would be crawling in student loan debt and may have potentially dropped out of college due to insufficient funds.”



IN CONCLUSION

For 65 years, ACT has been driven by a singular mission: to empower every learner to reach their full potential in college and career. This past year, the stories and statistics included in this report, from the 1.3 million applications submitted through ACAC to the thousands of students empowered by our Fee Waiver Program, are a testament to our unwavering commitment to breaking down systemic barriers and empowering learners to achieve their education and career goals.

This work is not just about programs and numbers; it's about opening doors for

first-generation students, providing confidence to high school juniors, and helping families overcome financial obstacles. Through strategic collaborations and resources, we are not only championing pathways to success but building a future where all learners have the chance to thrive.

We are deeply grateful for the partners and champions who help make this possible. As we move forward, we are more dedicated than ever to ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed. To learn more about how you can join us in this mission, visit the ACT Center for Impact and Learning at impactandlearning.act.org.



MOORCROFT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MOORCROFT, WYOMING, APPLY TO COLLEGE WITH THE SUPPORT OF SCHOOL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS. MOORCROFT IS A 2024 SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENT.