

HOST SITE FAQ: WHAT SCHOOLS NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COLLEGE APPLICATION CAMPAIGN?

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC) is a national effort of ACT's Center for Equity in 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.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT TO MY SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION AND STUDENTS? WHY JOIN?

This is a school-wide, a community-wide, a state-wide and a national 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. If your school is already implementing an approach to support students through the college application process, joining your state campaign and the national campaign elevates your good work and provides a platform for your school/organization to serve as a leader in this work. See ACAC's "Why Join?" document available on ACAC's resources webpage.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF HOST SITES?

As a host site, it is expected your school or organization will provide an opportunity for all seniors to complete at least one college application during the school day and school hours. You are also expected to report basic data to the state campaign coordinator about the number of students who participate and number of applications submitted.

IS THERE A TRAINING?

Each state handles training differently. Some host in-person events while others host webinars. Typically, training is only required for new host sites and new host site coordinators. Check with your state campaign coordinator.

IS THERE A COST ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATING?

There is no requirement to spend financial resources on your campaign events. Schools can do as much or as little as their budget allows for hosting a college application completion event. Most schools report spending less than \$200 to cover snacks for volunteers and preparing event resources.

HOW MUCH TIME IS REQUIRED OF STAFF?

Most schools report spending an average of 2 hours per week on planning and execution of their application events. Typically, schools spend more time planning in the first year or two but once the event is established, less time is required for planning. Also, planning efforts usually start 6-8 weeks prior to the application event. More time is required during the week/day(s) of the event than pre- and post-event.

WHO DOES MY SCHOOL CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN?

Each state has a state campaign coordinator. You can find contact information for your state campaign coordinator on the ACAC website at: <https://equityinlearning.act.org/acac/states/>



The importance of accessing formal education or training after high school continues to rise. After the Great Recession, more than 95% of jobs created required some postsecondary education ([Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce](#)). When COVID-19 struck and unemployment rose, those with some college education were more likely to retain their jobs ([Pew Research Center](#) and [Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce](#)). Most workforce developers and education leaders use the word “college” to include any type of postsecondary education or training beyond high school. When American College Application Campaign uses the word “college,” we mean any postsecondary path that results in a degree or credential beyond high school, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees.

During ACAC events, we encourage host sites to support students in pursuing whatever postsecondary pathway aligns with their goals: college, military, and/or workforce. Students who pursue education beyond high school are going to college. ACAC host site events highlight and promote the following:

- **Certificate Programs:** Certificate programs are specialized plans of study that are usually intended for students planning to pursue a skilled trade. Typically, these programs do not involve taking general education courses and usually can be completed in days, weeks or months, rather than years; they often serve to enhance a student’s field of study. Some employers and/or trade groups offer certificate programs. Additionally, some military training meets the qualifications for a certificate program.
- **Associate Degrees:** Associate degrees are typically awarded to students who complete a two-year period of study at a college. These degrees are often required for technical fields, but students can also pursue two-year degrees in business or other professional careers. An associate degree is typically awarded through community and technical or junior colleges
- **Bachelor’s Degrees:** Bachelor’s degrees are typically awarded to students who complete a four-year period of study at a college or university. Students pursuing a bachelor’s degree take classes in their career field and in general education subject areas. Some students pursue an associate transfer degree at a community college and transfer their credits to a four-year institution in order to complete a bachelor’s degree.

It is also important to keep the value of a college degree as a focus for events and discussions with students to help them understand the value of a degree or certificate:

- **Greater Wealth:** Individuals with a college degree earn more. In 2018, the median average earnings of young adults with a bachelor’s degree were \$54,700. In the same year, the media earnings of young adults with a high school diploma were \$34,900. ([National Center for Education Statistics](#))
- **More Security:** Those with a college degree are less likely to be affected by economic downturn. Americans with a high school diploma or less accounted for four out of every five jobs lost in the Great recession. These low-skill jobs are gone for good, replaced by jobs that require specialized training and skills (Lumina Foundation, [A Stronger Nation](#), 2021). Additionally, when COVID-19 struck and unemployment rose, those with some college education were more likely to retain their jobs ([Pew Research Center](#) and [Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce](#)).
- **Strong Communities:** College graduates are twice as likely to volunteer and contribute nearly 3.5 times more money to charity (Trostel, Lumina Foundation, [It’s Not Just the Money](#), 2015).
- **Better Health:** 69% of individuals ages 25- to 34-years-old with at least a bachelor’s degree reported exercising vigorously at least once a week. (College Board, [Education Pays](#), 2019).

**Modified with permission from the Michigan College Access Network.*