

# WHY DATA MATTER



## IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

As with evaluating the impact of any initiative, it is important to identify the goals of your state's College Application Campaign program and what your state will define as a successful implementation. In doing so, each state will need to develop a data collection plan and identify data analyses needed in order to evaluate the impact of the College Application Campaign program. This document, along with additional state coordinator resources available on the ACAC website, include some suggested data variables as well as a worksheet that your state can use as you consider the complex issues of data collection and analysis.

### SETTING GOALS

The goal of ACAC is to increase the number of first-generation college students and students from low-income families pursuing a college degree or other higher education credential by assisting high school seniors as they navigate the college admissions process and ensuring each participating student submits at least one admissions application.

**At a minimum, your state will need to collect data on the following three variables:**

1. The number of high schools participating in your state's College Application program.
2. The number of seniors who applied to at least one college during your state's College Application program.
3. The number of college applications that were submitted during your state's College Application program.

Resources for collecting this information vary by state and include data downloads from web portals, surveys of site coordinators, and surveys of participating students. Download ACAC's Data Collection Worksheet to identify how your state will access this important information.

## IDENTIFY YOUR EVENT'S GOALS

In addition to collecting information on these variables, your state may have specific goals for your College Application Campaign program. For instance, your goal may be that all participating high schools will have at least a 50% free-or-reduced lunch rate. Another goal could be that 60% of students who apply during your College Application Campaign program will enroll in postsecondary education the fall immediately following graduation. You might focus on new research suggesting that all students should apply to at least one local college or university and set a goal that each participating student does so. Or you could work with the postsecondary institutions in your state to set a goal that 100% of them waive application fees during your event or commit to accepting the ACT/College Board/NACAC or other fee waiver forms from students who are financially in need.

Use the space below to identify up to three goals for your state's College Application Campaign event. These may evolve and change as your state expands the initiative annually. It is important to ensure that your goals are specific and measurable. For instance, a specific goal to serve low-income communities could be 75% of participating schools will have a free-or-reduced lunch rate of 50% or higher.

**GOAL 1:**

**GOAL 2:**

**GOAL 3:**