



**Ohio** College Application **Month**

**ACAC**  
American College Application Campaign

## Final Report

November 1, 2014- November 30, 2014

**Ohio**

**Board of Regents**  
University System of Ohio

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## About the Campaign <sup>1</sup>

The American Council on Education (ACE) launched the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), in an effort to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing postsecondary education. The strategies of this initiative focus on helping high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensuring that each participating student submits at least one admissions application.

The first College Application Day was held at a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) North Carolina high school in Siler City, North Carolina in November 2005<sup>2</sup>. By 2010, the initiative had expanded to a week-long event, with more than 470 North Carolina high schools and schools across five southern states and Colorado participating. By 2014, the program was extended to a month-long initiative with participating sites in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

## Campaign Basics

The campaign focuses support for students on the college application process, which can be daunting, especially for first generation students and their families. As a part of the campaign, schools provide a dedicated time and space to ensure all graduating seniors have the opportunity to successfully submit at least one college application. The campaign goals are:

- Share information and build awareness
- Provide individualized advising
- Assist with application completion
- Engage parents and the surrounding community
- Make decisions and plan ahead

School counselors and teachers work with students in the months prior to the Campaign helping them identify where they want to apply, determine institutional fit with their goals, draft entrance essays, and secure information needed to successfully complete their college applications. While some colleges and universities encourage seniors to apply before November 1 each year, the national campaign encourages states to select a specific week in October or November to serve as the conclusion and celebration of the college application season. The basic expectations of the American College Application Campaign include:

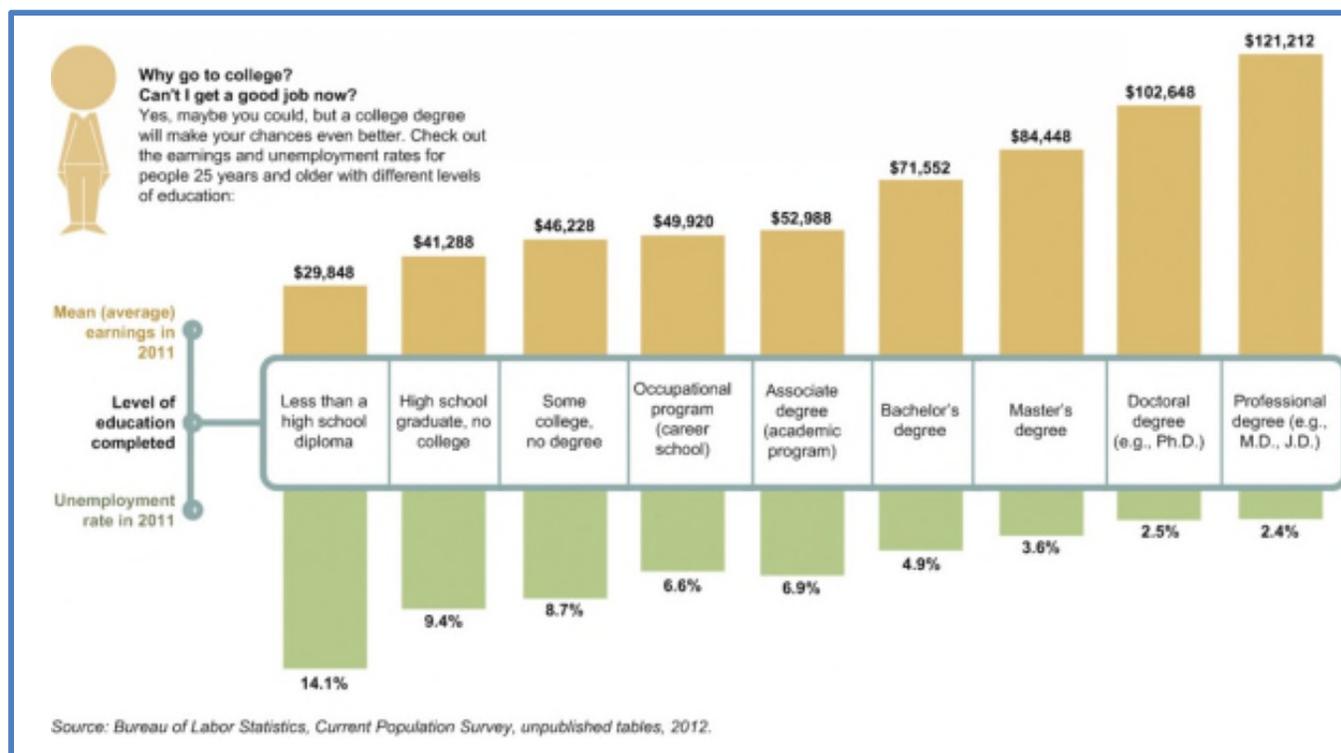
- Focus on reaching first-generation college students
- Activities should take place during the school day
- Programs require collaboration between K-12 and institutions of higher education
- Programs utilize existing networks and complement current statewide college-going efforts
- Build public awareness to help support the campaign
- Provide admissions/application fee waivers to those who qualify



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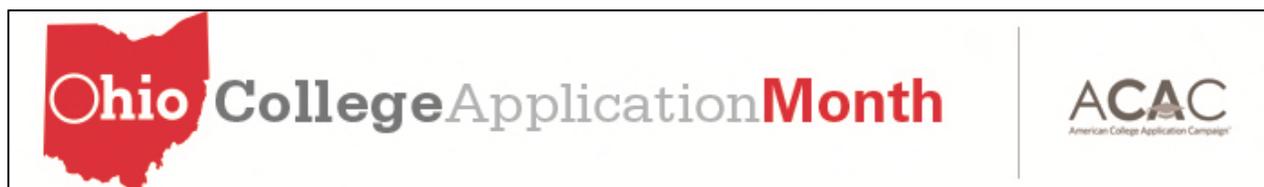
## Benefits of College Application

There are many reasons a student may want to apply to college. A postsecondary education can provide students with opportunities that they may not have otherwise such as helping to prepare for leading job opportunities, earning a higher income, and helping to find their passion. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce states that by 2018 almost 60 percent of all jobs in Ohio will require postsecondary education beyond high school. On average, college degree students earn more than non-college degree students. College can also provide students with an opportunity to explore their interests and introduce them to ideas they may have never thought of before. Exploring college majors is a great way to help find their passion for work and to help secure their future.



Ohio has a broad array of post-secondary opportunities, including career technical centers (Ohio Technical Centers), community colleges, small private liberal arts colleges, and large public research universities. Along with different types of opportunities, there are many different types of certificates, degrees and programs to help students achieve their career goals. Below is a list of the different types of options students in Ohio can choose from in order to help pursue their career interests and goals:<sup>3</sup>

- **Non-credit Programs** can be found at Ohio Technical Centers and community colleges to prepare students to take certification and licensure exams in career technical areas.
- **Certificates** are documents granted by colleges and Ohio Technical Centers after completion of study for specific occupations. Certificates usually require a full-time, six-month to one-year program of required courses or their part-time equivalent. Some certificates can be counted toward a higher degree, but this is not always the case.
- **Associate Degrees** are granted by colleges after students complete two-year, full-time programs of required courses or their part-time equivalent.
- **Bachelor degrees** are granted by universities or colleges after students have satisfactorily completed four-year, full-time programs of required courses or their part-time equivalent.
- **Advanced Degrees** - Master's, doctorate, or professional degrees (such as law or medicine) are earned after Bachelor's degrees.



## Ohio Efforts: Ohio College Application Month 2014<sup>4</sup>

Ohio College Application Month (OCAM) is a part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a multi-state initiative designed to help all seniors to apply to college. Ohio's College Application Month efforts follow the guidelines of the national campaign with the exception of the initiative being held during the entire month of November versus one week. The reason for this change was to allow Ohio's high schools and students the opportunity to successfully and effectively plan for their OCAM events and to best meet the needs of the students. The goal of Ohio College Application Month is to help all graduating seniors navigate through the college admissions process and ensures that each student submits at least one admissions application. OCAM also has a goal of supporting the Lumina Foundation goal of increasing the percentage of working age adults with degrees and credentials of value to 60 percent by 2025.

While the focus of Ohio College Application Month is particularly on students at risk of not submitting a college application, including low-income students and first-generation college-going students, many host sites go beyond working with seniors. The program encourages participating high schools to consider including activities for all students, including freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, as well as seniors who have already applied to college. The involvement of all students in the OCAM efforts helps schools and communities build a college-going culture.

Holding a College Application Month allows schools, organizations, and parents to support Ohio's high school seniors in successfully applying to college, with a special focus on those students at risk of not submitting a college application. Together we can ensure that all students have the opportunity to receive hands-on assistance as they take the first big step towards continuing their education following high school. Ohio College Application Month is an initiative supported by the Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio Department of Education, and the American College Application Campaign. There is also support from community partners who get involved: high schools and Educational Service Centers throughout Ohio; public and private colleges and universities in Ohio; Ohio Association of College Admissions Counselors; Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators; Ohio College Access Network; and Battelle for Kids.

A statewide steering committee oversees the development and growth strategies of Ohio College Application Month year round. The committee provides oversight to the campaign and informs programming, encourages buy-in, assists with planning and publicizing the initiative, ensures necessary resources are available, and evaluates the effectiveness of the campaign. Each participating state has a state coordinator who acts as the lead person for Ohio's College Application Month events. The state coordinator is directly supported by the Ohio Board of Regents and is responsible for helping to recruit for host site and volunteer participation, site coordinator webinar/online trainings, and putting together resources to help support site coordinators and their OCAM events. This past year, the state coordinator collaborated with the Ohio Board

### OCAM 2014 Key Components

- Host sites are expected to designate space and time during the school day for completing applications
- Host sites are expected to provide technology and resources in order to complete applications online and the student survey post event
- Complements current college-going/college-access efforts

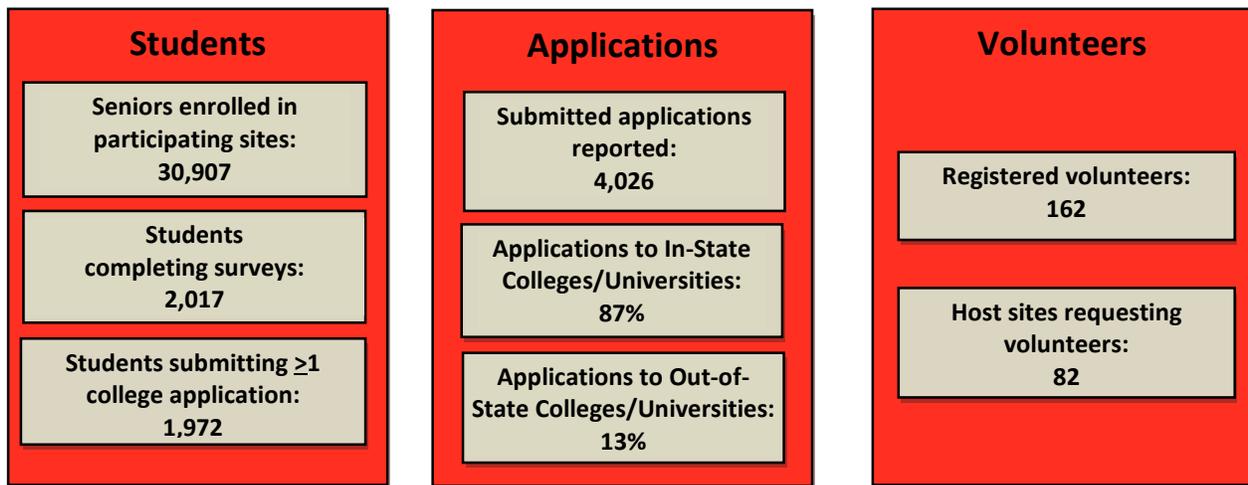
of Regents to put together a website specifically for Ohio College Application Month. For more information please visit our website at [www.ohiohighered.org/cam](http://www.ohiohighered.org/cam).

## 2014 Data Summary and Key Results

Relevant research shows us that first generation, low-socioeconomic-status students and low GPA and SAT® students apply to relatively few colleges and, at the same time, have low enrollment rates. By increasing the number of college applications from one to two, it can increase a student’s probability of enrolling at a four-year college by 40 percent, and increasing the number of applications from two to three can increase a student’s probability of enrollment by 10 percent. Policymakers and higher education practitioners can increase college enrollment among traditionally underrepresented students by encouraging students to submit more applications and by developing approaches to assist these students in the application process.

Ohio first piloted this initiative in 2013, securing a total of 12 host sites that were committed to promoting and preparing OCAM events within their school. The total number of seniors involved ranged (depending on reporting) between 763 and 859 students. In 2014, Ohio more than doubled the number of participating sites with 154 high schools and career technical centers committing to participate in this year’s campaign. The original target goal for the 2014 initiative and host site participation was 50 host sites. While not all sites that originally agreed to participate were able to successfully host activities, we estimate that nearly 150 sites hosted events all around the state during the month of November, 2014.

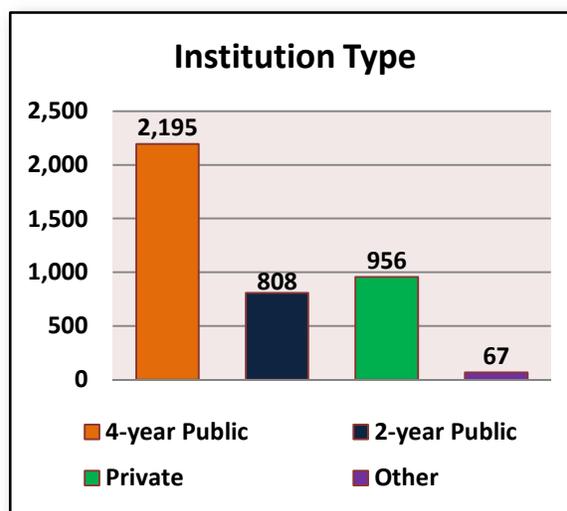
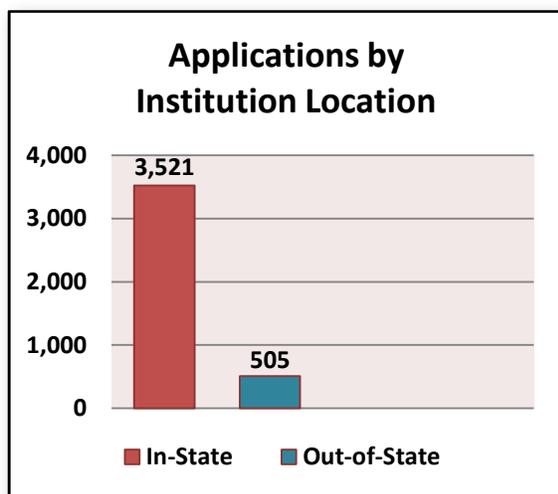
Of the 154 host sites, only **75 host sites reported data** by the requested date to be included in this report. The following summary of data is from the 75 reporting sites. An entire list of the participating 2014 OCAM Host Sites is available at [www.ohiohighered.org/cam](http://www.ohiohighered.org/cam).



OCAM was introduced to school districts at the Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling’s (OACAC) 2014 Articulation Conference in September 2014. During this conference, high school counselors were provided with the framework of OCAM and what to expect as the next steps moving forward with the planning of the initiative. This campaign was definitely something that Ohio’s high schools and guidance counselors were very excited to be a part of and to start preparing for. OCAM had a **total of 154 host sites** registered and committed to participating in the initiative by mid- October. Even after the deadline, there was still a huge desire for host site participation into early November.

Upon completion of the OCAM events, a student survey was given to each participating student. We had asked that each site coordinator have all students who participated in the event take the survey in order to report each site’s success within the overall campaign. Of the **4,026 total applications** reported as submitted, **87 percent** of the

applications were submitted to in-state institutions and **13 percent** were submitted to out-of-state institutions. The OCAM student survey indicated the popular out-of-state choices for Ohio’s high school seniors included California, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The majority of the students submitted applications to two- and four-year public institutions with **54 percent** of the applications being submitted to 4-year public institutions and **24 percent** to private institutions. The category labeled “Other” includes those students who submitted applications to either enlist with the military or to cosmetology and art institutes.



## Volunteer Support

Volunteer support is essential to the success of Ohio’s College Application Month efforts. The number of volunteers needed is dependent upon each host site and the number of students participating in each OCAM event. It is recommended that each site have three to four volunteers available when working with a group of 25 to 30 high school seniors. Volunteers were recruited through statewide and local efforts. The OACAC committee worked hard to help support volunteer recruitment by sending out email blasts several times prior to the beginning of the campaign, highlighting the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) website, and sending out the website link to sign up as a volunteer and/or host site. Our volunteer recruitment efforts also went as far as reaching out through personal emails to admissions counselors all around the state and inviting them to join this year’s campaign.

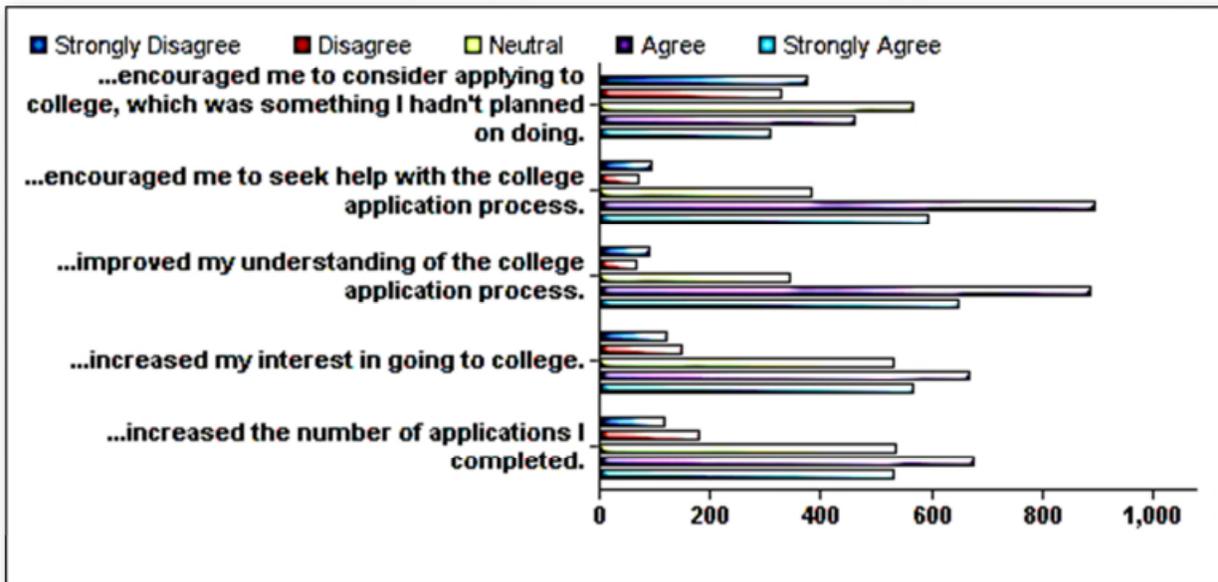
A volunteer survey and web link was created and housed on the OBR website in order to keep track of all volunteers who were interested in volunteering their time. A total of **162 volunteers** completed the survey and demonstrated a committed interest to serve as an OCAM volunteer. Whether volunteers were able to volunteer only an hour of their time or a couple hours, there was a huge volunteer response. According to the post-event volunteer survey, the average time spent volunteering at a host site was approximately four hours. The time commitment is minimal and often dependent upon the volunteer’s schedule which allows room for volunteer flexibility. There were even many volunteers who signed up to volunteer for multiple sites and we hope to be able to use this list to help recruit for future OCAM efforts. **93 percent** of the volunteers who filled out the post-event volunteer survey also expressed an interest in OCAM 2015.

In addition to recruiting for volunteers, Ohio’s OCAM State Coordinator also worked closely with **82 host sites** who specifically requested a need for volunteers and support in their school. These sites may have not had the extra staff to accommodate their event or they simply wanted more support from higher education professionals. **All 82**

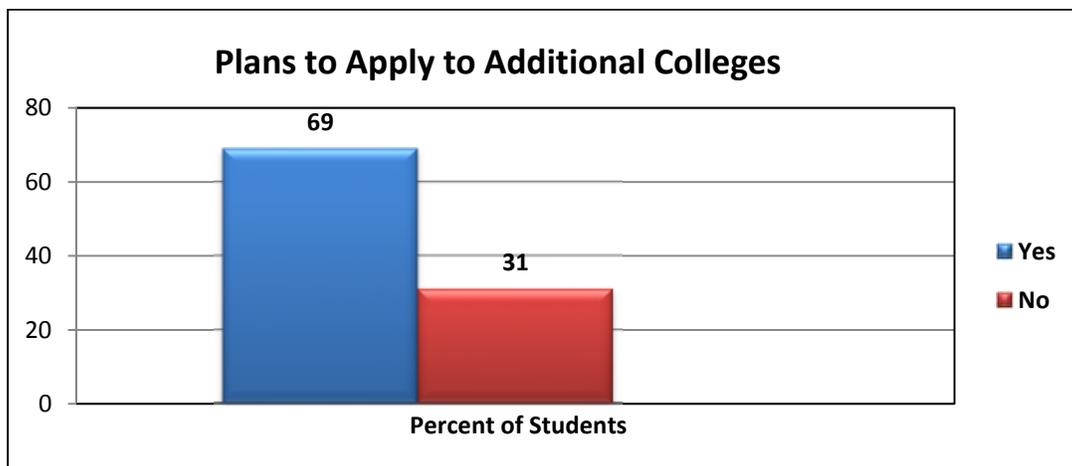
**host sites** were secured with volunteers prior to their event either through their own recruitment efforts or with the support of the State Coordinator. This year’s volunteers included school faculty and staff, college and/or university staff, local business leaders, parents, school alumni, current college students, and local College Access Networks such as College Now Greater Cleveland. Together we can ensure that all students have the opportunity to receive hands-on assistance as they take the first big step towards continuing their education following high school.

## The Student Experience

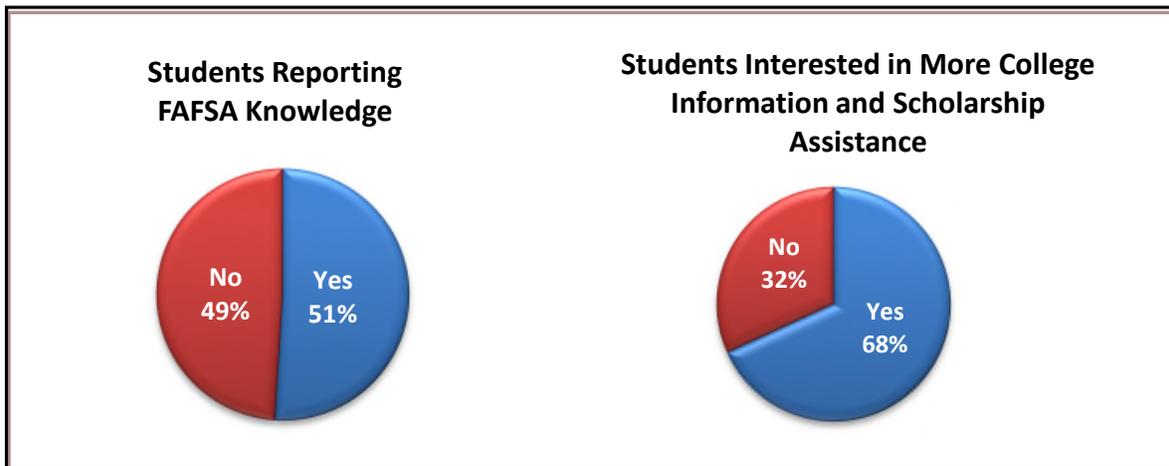
OCAM 2014 participants were asked to complete a survey to help document the student experience. Approximately **49 percent** of the students who participated in OCAM 2014 were first generation students. The data below demonstrate how students rated their experience while participating in OCAM 2014.



Participants reported that the efforts of the event increased the number of college applications they completed. Further, **69 percent** of respondents reported that they plan to apply to additional postsecondary institutions after participating in OCAM events.



The data below depict the students FAFSA knowledge as we move beyond OCAM and towards the next step in the college information process, seeking information on available financial aid. The students reported in the survey regarding whether or not they knew how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Form and if they know when it's due. Survey responses indicated that **51 percent** of participants know how to complete the FAFSA and know when the deadline for submitting the paperwork is due. Almost equally, **49 percent** of students reported that they do not know how to complete the FAFSA (or some of its parts) and/or when it is due. Fortunately, Ohio has a wonderful event (see details below) dedicated to helping student and families who need extra help completing this part of the college process. Results showed that **68 percent** of students reported having an interest in receiving additional college and/or scholarship information. These students provided us with their contact information so that we are able to communicate any additional college-going efforts and/or information to them as needed.



### What's next? College Goal Sunday

College Goal Sunday is a program that provides free information and assistance to students and families applying for financial assistance for higher education. All students who plan to attend college should attend this event, especially students and families who need assistance in applying for financial aid. Adult students entering college are also encouraged to attend.

This event will help families of college-bound students take the first step in applying for college by going step by step through the FAFSA that will lead to a completed financial aid form for the student.

Ohio College Application Month activities complement the school and community's efforts to help build a college-going culture. Activities leading up to, during, and after Ohio College Application Month vary from host site to host site.

Some high schools go as far as helping students register for their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Personal Identification Number (PIN) or provide dates and information regarding Ohio's College Goal Sunday or other related FAFSA events to ensure they complete the admissions process and successfully apply for financial aid. Ohio College Application Month is one way to encourage and increase college access for Ohio's seniors. Host sites are encouraged to tell students about College Goal Sunday as a way to build a college-going culture within the high school and the community, and to seek other opportunities to ensure students are college ready.



For more information, visit <http://www.ohiocollegegoalsunday.org>.

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## Planning for 2015 Ohio College Application Month

Planning is underway for 2015 Ohio College Application Month to be held in November. The advisory committee hopes to see the host site participation number and senior participation number continue to increase, moving toward a long-term goal of reaching all high schools in Ohio. We also hope to achieve 100 percent overall post-event participation regarding the student survey, host site and volunteer surveys. By completing these, we hope to be able to better plan future programs, resources, and ways to support Ohio learners.

The committee is particularly seeking host site high schools focused on improving their college access efforts with low-income students, first-generation college-going students, and students who may be unaware of the benefits postsecondary education can provide in helping them reach their career and life goals.

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## References

<sup>1</sup> American Council on Education, Applying to College

<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/American-College-Application-Campaign.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> American Council on Education, About ACAC

<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/ACAC-About-Us.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> University System of Ohio, <https://www.ohiohighered.org/>

<sup>4</sup> University System of Ohio, Ohio College Application Month, <https://www.ohiohighered.org/cam>

<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from “*Can Applying to More Colleges Result in Increased Enrollment Rates?*” Jonathan Smith, Associate Policy Research Scientist, College Board Advocacy & Policy Center