

Benefits of hosting J2C programs Q&A's

Q: *How can hosting Journey to College Programs help me in my efforts without sacrificing more of my time?*

A: It is likely you are already offering assistance to your students as they submit college admissions applications, complete and submit the FAFSA, and celebrate their postsecondary educational choices. This assistance you already provide can easily be translated into Journey to College programs that are officially recognized and promoted via news releases, dhe.mo.gov, Journey to College social media campaigns, and other communications from the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE). Furthermore, all materials provided by MDHE reflect best practices based on research of what other states are doing and on what Missouri high schools have said they find helpful. You do not have to do the research or produce the material yourself, saving you time.

You also have the opportunity to customize each program to fit your school's needs. For example, for Apply Missouri, you may only have enough time and resources to simply offer time during school for your seniors to work on submitting applications and complete MDHE's student survey. Other than submitting a sign-in sheet which lists each participant's name, birth date and number of applications completed for data collection and completing MDHE's site coordinator survey on-line, that is all that is required to host an Apply Missouri event. However, you may have the time and resources to offer a more robust event which includes many activities throughout your event time line such as working on admissions essays in senior English classes and financial literacy lessons in math class. You may want to have a social media campaign supporting your event and games to get your students excited about Apply Missouri. The level of effort in hosting this event is in your hands.

Q: *Our district does not have money to support more programs. How can we host Journey to College programs with little to no funds to do so?*

A: All promotional items, publications, and materials are provided free of charge from MDHE, eliminating the need to purchase anything, and every program can be modified to fit the specific needs of your school community. The MDHE will inform you of resources to help you find ways to promote your event and engage your student body with little to no cost.

Q: *Our district is very small. Can I still host these programs?*

A: Yes. There is no restriction on district/school size. The MDHE encourages EVERY high school to host all three programs; however, you do have the choice of hosting just one, two, or all three. Again, each program can be customized to fit your school's needs.

Q: *Are there other benefits of which I should be aware?*

A: For schools participating in all three programs, the MDHE provides individual outcome reports along with a plaque of recognition for displaying at your school, showing you are a Journey to College School. For a sample of an individualized outcome report, please go to dhe.mo.gov/ppc/journeytocollegeprograms.php.

Q: *I feel as if I am not familiar enough with college admissions and financial aid to host these programs. What kind of assistance is provided?*

A: The MDHE conducts an in-person meeting as well as webinars for site coordinators providing state and program updates; FAFSA and FSA ID tips and updates; and topics of interest such as how to effectively use Missouri Connections in your Journey to College programs and more. In addition, the MDHE communicates with site coordinators an average of 20 times per year with task reminders, program updates, training opportunities, and other helpful information. There is a Journey to College electronic mailing list to which you can subscribe. The MDHE provides a Journey to College resource manual that will provide everything you need to host a successful event for any or all three Missouri programs: Apply Missouri, FAFSA Frenzy, and Decision Day. Finally, the FAFSA Frenzy program relies heavily on volunteers from Missouri's financial aid community. During the 2016-17 academic year, 134 FAFSA Frenzy events operated statewide with 50% of the 437 volunteers having "Expert" or "Advanced" FAFSA knowledge and experience.