

Journey to College

Outreach, Engagement, and Program Growth

ALISON NOTTER, DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH

GARY STANDIFORD, OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Today's Agenda

01

**MDHEWD INFORMATION
AND BACKGROUND**

02

**JOURNEY TO COLLEGE
OVERVIEW**

03

APPROACH TO OUTREACH

04

**FUTURE CYCLES & KEY
TAKEAWAYS**

MDHEWD Vision

TO PUT MISSOURIANS ON A PATH
TO LEARN, WORK, AND PROSPER.



Provide students and families with information about **planning** and **paying** for college



Help students understand they **can afford college** and show them how to access funds to help **pay for school**



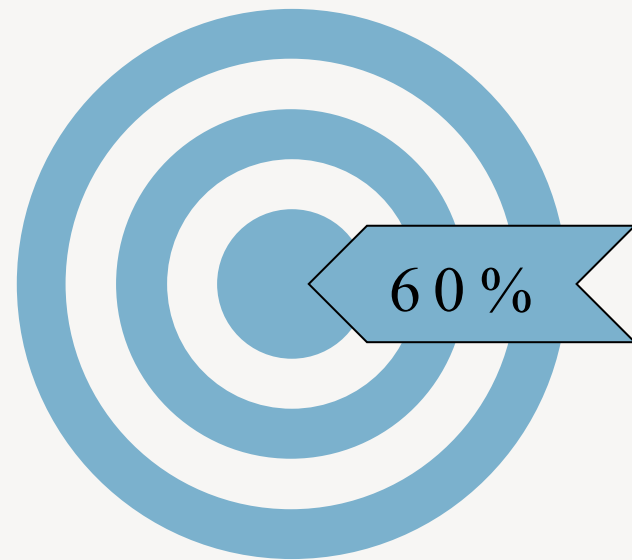
Help students **feel empowered** to continue their education and ultimately graduate

Building Missouri's Future

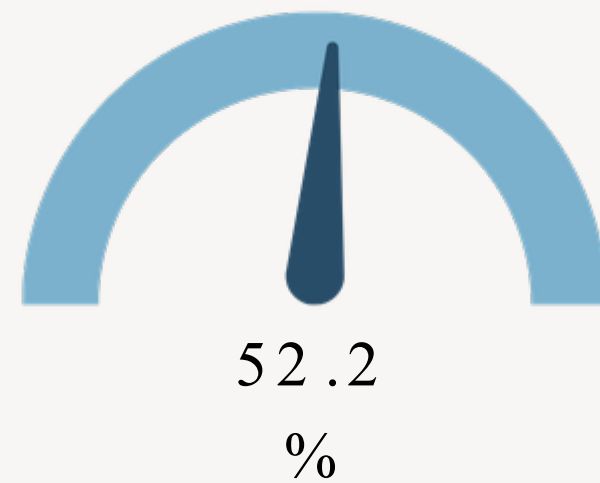
A strategic plan to provide pathways and reduce barriers to educational attainment and workforce participation.

Educational Attainment

Current Target:

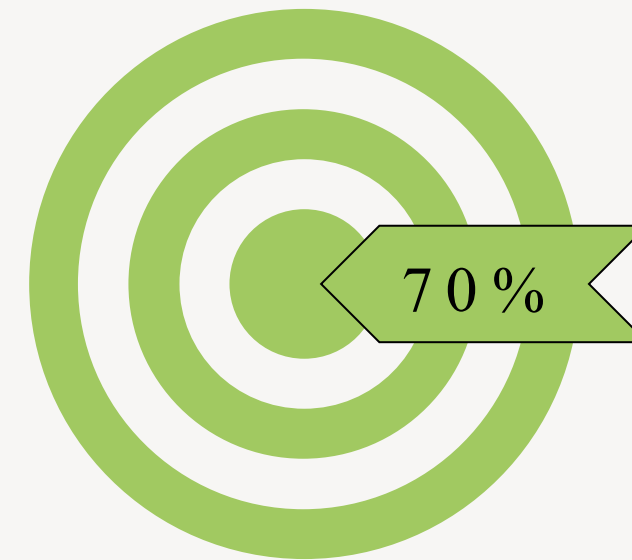


Current Status:

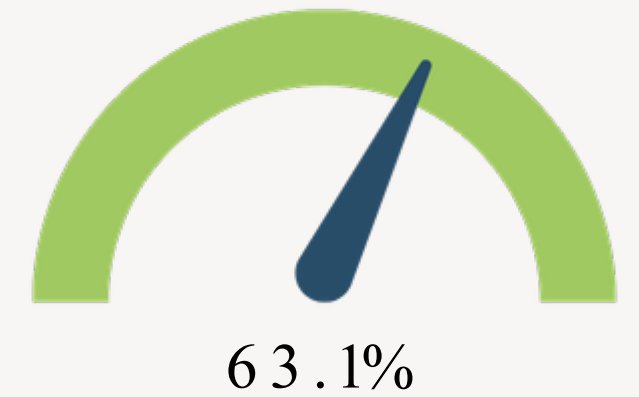


Labor Force Participation

Current Target:



Current Status:



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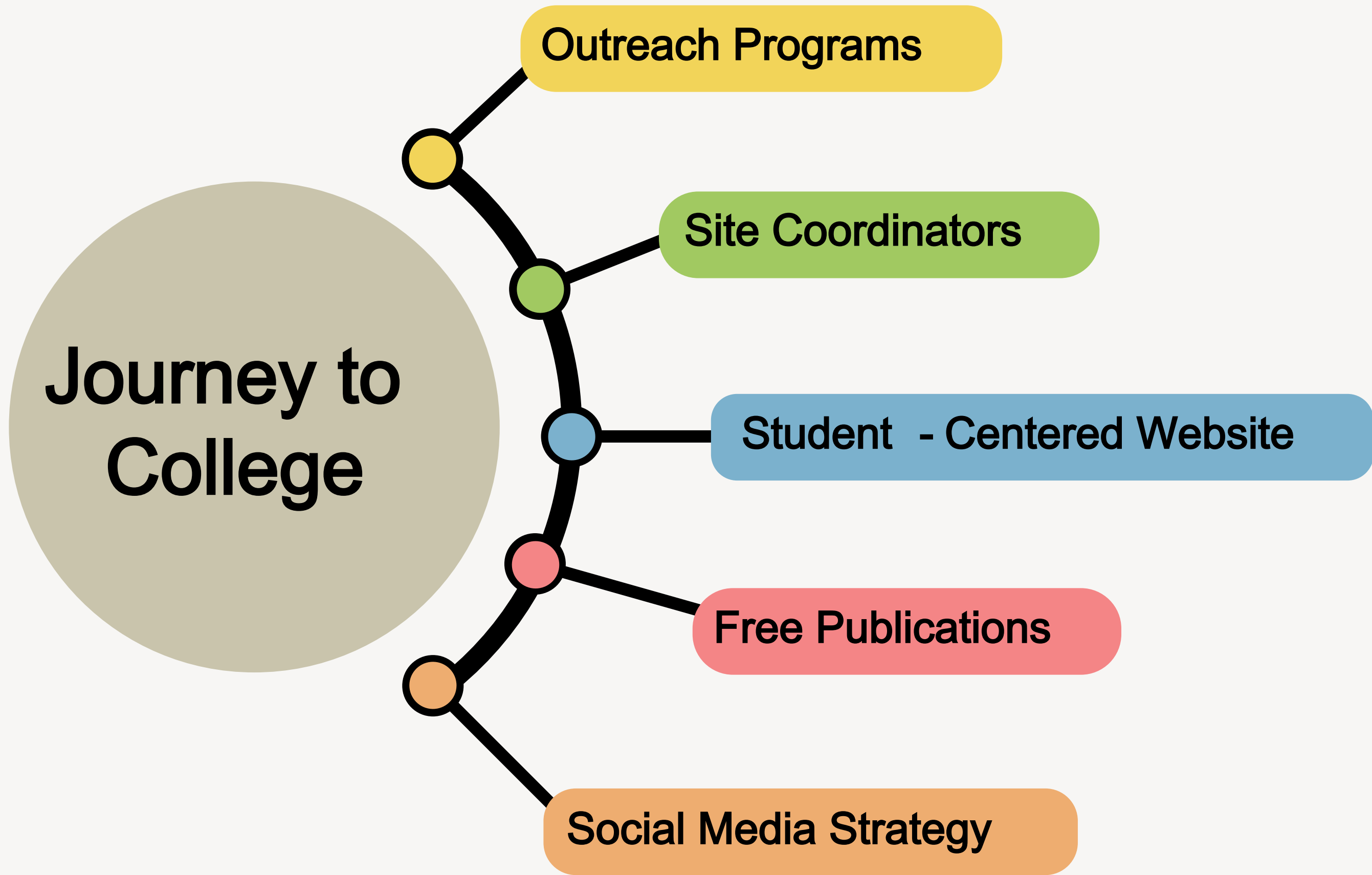
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Our Programs

We support counselors in person and virtually, as they plan events to help their students explore their options after high school.

Apply Missouri



Apply Missouri events are designed to help students find their best fit and apply to college.

FAFSA Frenzy



FAFSA Frenzy events help students and parents file the FAFSA to secure financial aid for college.

Decision Day



Decision Day events celebrate seniors and their plans after high school.

Site Coordinators

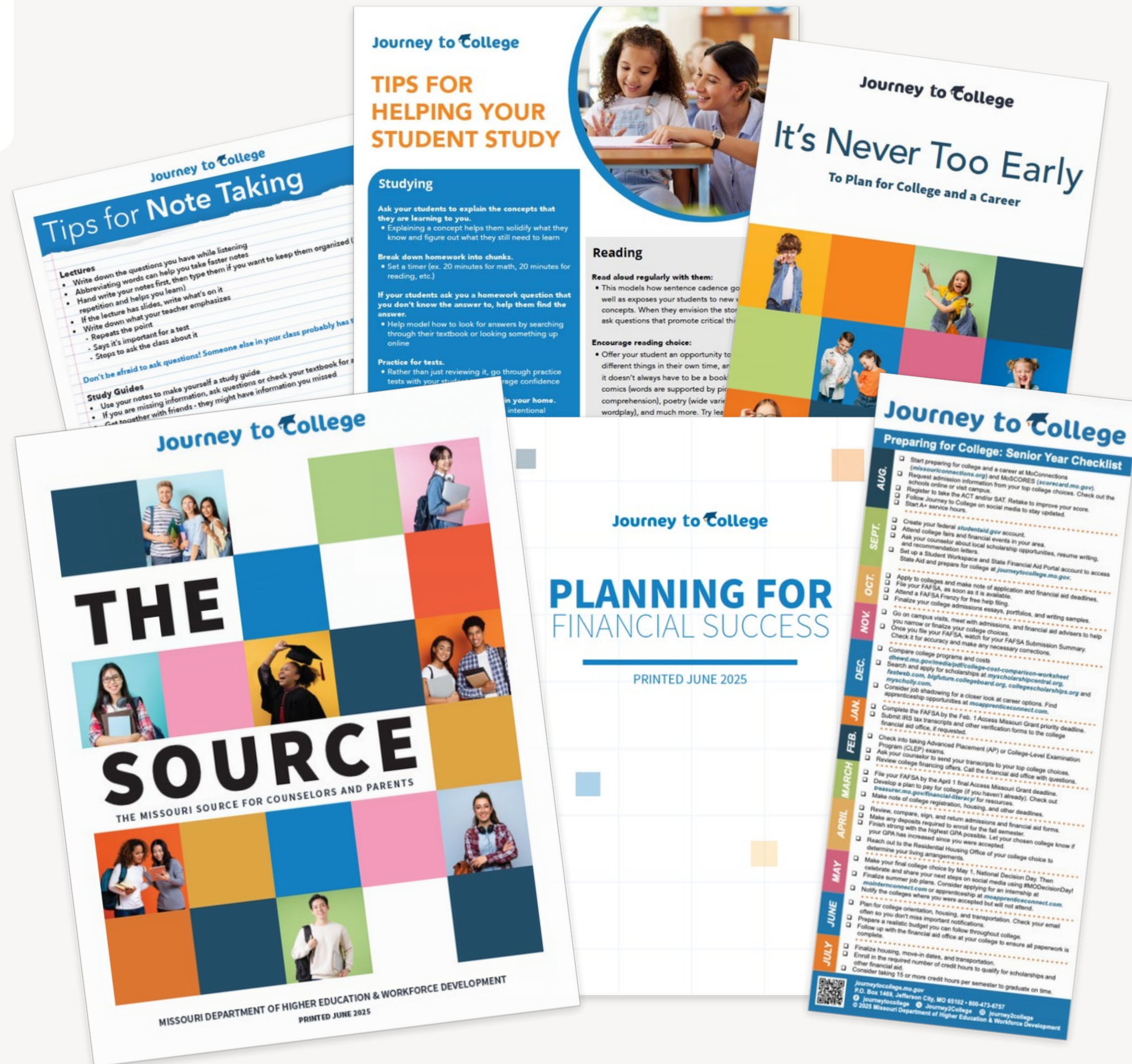
Our strategic partners in student success. Counselors, teachers, and other college access professionals register **each academic year** as a Site Coordinator to:

- Host Journey to College activities and events
- Utilize our online Site Coordinator Resource Manual for tips to host successful events
- Order free Journey to College branded promotional items including: stress balls, graduation cords, and more
- Request a speaker from the team to present to their students
- Get one-on-one help planning events and advising students on college applications, financial aid, and more
- Access to a bimonthly which includes upcoming financial aid deadlines, information on free resources to help empower students, and a professional advice column



Free Publications

- 13 free publications, updated and printed annually
 - Tips for Note Taking Flyer
 - Helping Students Study Flyer
 - College and Career Guide*
 - Financial Aid Guide*
 - Turning Kids' Hobbies into Skills Flyer
 - It's Never Too Early Pamphlet
 - It's Never Too Late Pamphlet
 - J2C Senior Year Checklist
 - Planning for Financial Success Booklet
 - Smart About Spending Teacher's Manual
 - Smart About Spending Student's Workbook
 - The Missouri Source*
 - Career Coloring Book
- All publications are available for Site Coordinators to order and distribute as needed
- Some publications are also available in Spanish



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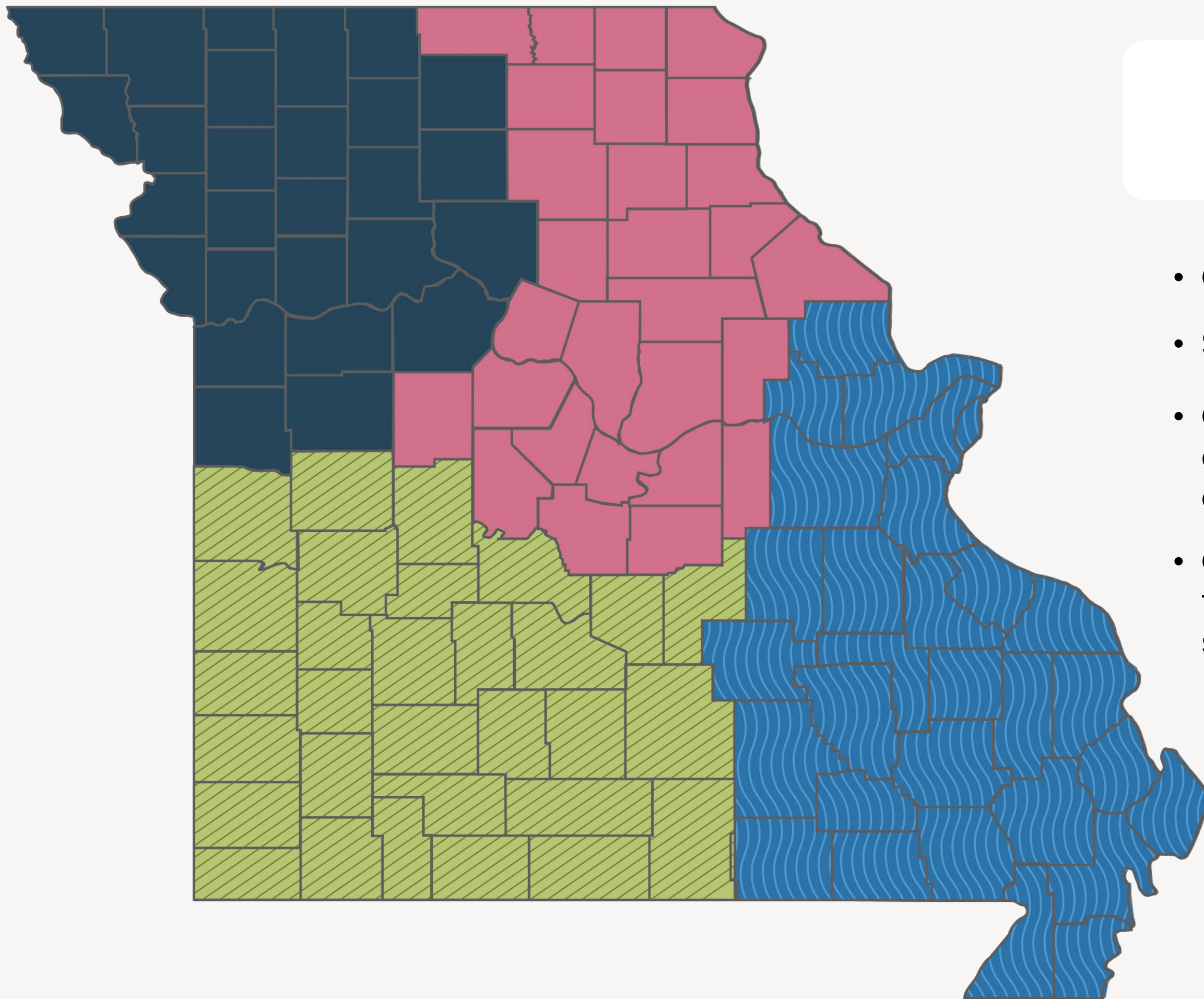
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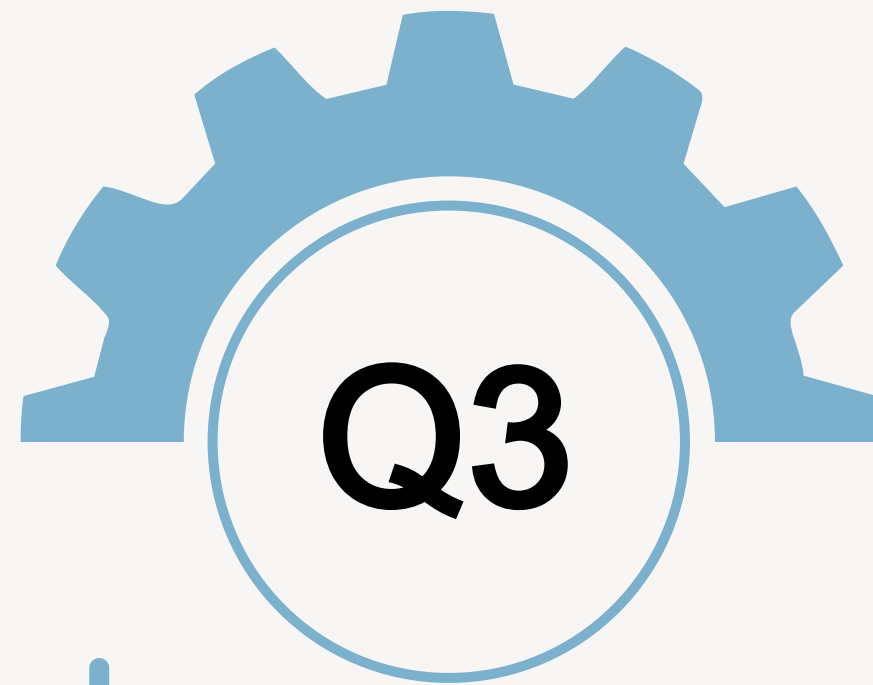
04

**FUTURE CYCLES & KEY
TAKEAWAYS**



Our Team

- Comprised of 5 members
- Servicing all 114 counties in Missouri
- Outreach Coordinators work in regions, creating personal connections with site coordinators in their area
- Coordinators utilize ASANA to ensure that we are able to attend as many school events as possible



- July**
 - New fiscal year (FY) begins
 - Journey to College Day
- August**
 - Team begins attending conferences and college fairs through the Fall
 - Presentations on planning and paying for college begin
 - Apply Missouri events begin
- September**
 - Prep for FAFSA marketing campaign

- October**
 - FAFSA launches and Frenzies Begin
 - Event attendance
- November**
 - FAFSA Frenzy and Apply Missouri events continue
 - Presentations and college fairs continue
- December**
 - Apply Missouri events wind down
 - Heavy FAFSA marketing push while students are home for holidays

- January**
 - Event lull creates time to reset and regroup
 - Team retreat to begin planning new FY strategy
- February**
 - FAFSA Events continue
 - Spring fairs & Conferences
- March**
 - Annual publication review begins
 - Journey to College Day planning begins

- April**
 - FAFSA Frenzy events wind down
 - Decision Day events pick up
- May**
 - Decision Day events wind down
 - Summer projects along with conferences
- June**
 - Plans are finalized for Journey to College Day
 - Fiscal year ends

Site Coordinator Recruitment

We ask Site Coordinators to register each academic year

How we recruit new Site Coordinators:

- Word-of-Mouth
- Tabling at Conferences
- Reminders
- Incentives
- No sign upcut-off

258

Site Coordinators registered during the 2024 - 25 academic year



+20%

310

Site Coordinators registered during the 2025 - 26 academic year

Master Site List

Counselors sign up via a Qualtrics Survey:

- Name, School, County, # of Events
- Director gets alerted
- Export data into an excel that each team member has access to



- Repeats happen—raw data is in the “All Regions” tab before being scrubbed and placed in appropriate tab(s)
- Each Outreach Coordinator keeps track of their region differently

Communication: Email Series

Welcome

Apply MO

**FAFSA
Frenzy**

**Pubs &
Promos**

**Apply MO
2**

**FAFSA
Frenzy 2**

**Decision
Day**

**End of
Year**

Next Steps Newsletter

Published bimonthly and distributed to site coordinators – Next Steps serves as a key communications tool for those who work with students.

- Upcoming financial aid deadlines
- FAFSA updates
- Resource spotlights
- Professional advice column
- Contact information for outreach coordinators
- News from the department and educational partners
- Links to order publications and promo items



Supporting Them Supporting Students

Tools, Resources, & Availability

93k

Publications & Promotional Items shipped
during the 2024 - 25 academic year



143k

Publications & Promotional Items shipped
during the 2025 - 26 academic year

+54%

300+

Journey to College Events reported during
the 2024 - 25 academic year



+110%

630+

Journey to College Events reported during
the 2025 - 26 academic year

Numbers accurate as of 6/4/2026

Data: Quantitative

- Post-event surveys : Qualtrics
- Past asks vs. current asks
- Longitudinal data year over year
 - Before Embedding Sign In Sheet Ask- 24-25:
 - AM Data (153 Events Reported): **27% Survey Turn-In**
 - FF Data (240 Events Reported): **16% Survey Turn-In**
 - After Embedding Sign In Sheet Ask-25-26:
 - AM Data (167 Events Reported): **27% Survey Turn-In**
 - FF Data (247 Events Reported): **30% Survey Turn-In**



Data: Qualitative

This event is always a highlight for my seniors. I love to make it feel like a "party" for them with snacks and music all day. I get so many positive comments from them afterwards and it helps to instill an overall sense of optimism about the future. I LOVE hosting the ApplyMO event and recommend that all secondary schools do so! –Blue Eye

Thank you for the support and the resources! It is great for small schools like mine to have pre-set information!-Ash Grove

It is especially great for those new to the role.-Appleton

We always appreciate having a DHEWD helper at our events. Thank you for everything you do and offer the students and schools in our state! -Kirksville

Thank you for all you do, and we are thrilled to participate in all of Journey to College's Events-Union

Thank you for this resource and this program!
-Festus

I was thankful for the resource.-Buffalo

I am very appreciative to Journey to College and the knowledge I've gained from it the past two years-Fatima

Educational Partners

We are fortunate to have a robust and symbiotic relationship with several educational partners.



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Future Cycles

Automatic Email Triggers:

Qualtrics is able to send a short “welcome email” as well as email the appropriate OC of sign up.

Resource Video Library:

Evergreen, animated library of short, digestible videos that break down the Resource Manual

Embedding Sign-In Sheets

Continue to embed, but require typed responses for legibility

FAFSA Frenzy Volunteers

Switching from a Google Calendar to an “opt-in” sign up that SC’s can access to see who’s available in their region

Key Takeaways

1. Providing the “Work”

We do as much of the “work” as possible on our end so that counselors can take it and run with it. This way, they don’t have to spend potential student facing hours brainstorming / creating graphics

2. Consistency

By having similar beats every year (J2C Day in July, have them sign up every year, email series, etc.) the program become predictable, and counselors know that we are here to help year after year

3. Available, Not Demanding

The Outreach Team is there to help site coordinators as much, or as little, as they would like us to. Some just sign up for the free items and don’t host events, and that’s okay!

4. Data Collection

Always good to have but have a reason for it. Don’t collect it just to collect.

THANK YOU!

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CONNECT WITH US!

Facebook: [@journeytocollege](#)

Instagram: [@journey2college](#)

Youtube: [@MoHigherEducation](#)



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