

Fiscal Year 2025

Annual Report

January 2026





Common App Chief Executive Officer Jenny Rickard with past and current Common App board members at the Common App 50th Anniversary Party. Friends of Common App gathered at KEMBA Live! in Columbus, Ohio during the 2025 NACAC Conference to commemorate the half-century milestone.

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Dear friends,

I'm excited to share with you our 2025 Annual Report, which highlights Common App's activities, achievements, and financial status over the past fiscal year. This report also provides us an opportunity to preview where we're headed over the next year as we continue to live out our mission of increasing access, equity, and integrity in the college admissions process.

We are full-speed ahead in our Next Chapter, working to scale our programs to help meet our moonshot goal: closing the gap in students from low- and middle-income communities applying for postsecondary opportunities. From scaling our direct admissions program to reach more than 700,000 students with admissions offers to helping students connect with nearly \$5 million in scholarship funding, this annual report shows the ways we worked to meet that moonshot goal in the 2025 fiscal year.

We achieved these milestones against the backdrop of a complex and evolving landscape. We recognize the significant challenges the postsecondary sector faced this past year and the uncertainty that remains ahead. However, the stories in this report underscore Common App's relentless commitment to its mission, regardless of the climate. We overcame obstacles last year to deliver success for our students and members, and we are well-positioned to do it again.

Common App's Board of Directors is charged with providing strategic guidance and ensuring the organization is working to deliver its mission effectively. As you'll see in this report, the Common App team makes that easy for us. Please take a moment to review the accomplishments of this past year.

We appreciate your partnership in this work and look forward to what this new year brings.

Sincerely,

Vincena Allen

Vincena Allen
Chair, Common App Board of Directors

Our board is made up of college admissions leaders, school counselors, and at-large experts from outside the field united by a passion for expanding college access on a global scale

Vincena Allen
Chief Growth Officer & Vice President
The SEED Foundation

Adrienne Amador Oddi
Vice President, Strategic Enrollment and Communications
Queens University of Charlotte

Yvonne Berumen
Vice President of Admission and Financial Aid
Pitzer College

Carolyn Blair
Director of Counseling Services
Clayton High School

Dale Bittinger
Assistant Vice Provost Undergraduate Admissions, Orientation & School Partnerships
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Adele Brumfield
Vice Provost, Enrollment Management
University of Michigan

Kim Cook
Chief Executive Officer
National College Attainment Network

Miguel Costa
Dean of Admissions, Undergraduate Programs.
IE University

Jeff Gates
Senior Vice President Enrollment & Marketing
Stetson University

Steve Hahn
Senior Director
Huron Consulting Group

Descatur "Des" Potier
Executive Director of Admissions
Morehouse College

Jenny Rickard
Chief Executive Officer
Common App
(Ex Officio)

Stephen Smith
CEO
Intellispark

Whitney Soule
Vice Provost & Dean of Admission
University of Pennsylvania

Tevera Stith
Consultant
T. Stith Consultants

Sara Strickland
School Counselor
City Academy Charter School (Salt Lake City, UT)

Anna Takahashi
Director of College Counseling
Eastside College Prep

Jonathan B Williams
Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid
Pomona College
Chair-Elect
Common App
Board of Directors

COMMON APP AND ITS NEXT CHAPTER

Tapping into the spirit of our founders from 1975 to increase access in the college admissions process, we're on a mission to increase access to students from low- and middle-income communities.

Since we started measuring our progress towards our moonshot goal in the 2021–2022 application season, numbers show that our gap in students coming from low- and middle-income communities using the Common App is steadily closing. We're excited to share more with you in our 2026 Impact Report, coming in March 2026.

"I'm so glad I had something to apply to college quickly and easily, as well as a complete guide to show the best version of me."

**-Maya Stephens
student**



How we reached the moon in 2025

+14%

increase in first-generation applicants

+10%

increase in students from **below-median income ZIP codes**

+10%

increase in students who were **eligible for a fee waiver**

Common App has committed to four specific goals.

These goals lay out the work that needs to be done to make progress toward our moonshot goal by 2030:

- ◆ **Maintain reliability while building flexible, innovative new offerings**
- ◆ **Reinforce and expand relationships & partnerships**
- ◆ **Be a leading voice for access to higher education**
- ◆ **Be excellent to one another in everything we do**

1

Maintain reliability while building flexible, innovative new offerings

Working directly with state programs and institutions connects Common App with more students in search of higher education resources and opportunities.

Direct admissions

Direct admissions is designed to bridge the gap between high school and higher education by proactively admitting students into college. Common App's program identifies first-generation and middle- and low-income students that meet the admissions requirements of participating institutions, and informs those students who they have been conditionally accepted to a given institution based on their qualifications.

FY25 PROGRESS

In its second year as a full-scale program, Common App Direct Admissions partnered with **119 member institutions** across 35 states to serve more than **700,000+ first-generation and low-income students**.

733,000+ students receiving offers
119 participating institutions

Member college breakdown

35 states **27%** public institutions
31% MSIs **73%** private institutions

22% of students who received offers **added at least 1 college** they weren't already considering

3 in 4 students who chose to add a college that sent them an offer ended up actually applying

32% higher application rates among students who received a direct admissions offer compared to those who did not

Student Context Pilot

In partnership with Harvard Graduate School of Education's initiative, Making Caring Common, we created a Student Context Inventory that gives students the option* to tell us more about their circumstances and responsibilities in a checklist-style section of the application. This checklist allows students to think more broadly about their experiences like working at a paid job to support their family, living in an environment without reliable internet, interpreting or translating for household members, taking care of their siblings, and other responsibilities students might have.

**As of 2025-26, this is now a permanent part of the First year application and Transfer application as a required question for all students called "Responsibilities and circumstances".*

FY25 PROGRESS

↑ 31% of all applicants on the Common App platform this past season encountered the Student Context Inventory question on a participating member's supplemental question screen (*up from 21%*) last year

↑ 65% of students opted to respond to the question (*compared to a 60% response rate last year*)

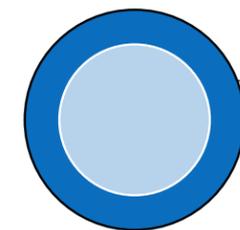
↑ 19% of applicants who saw the question provided four or more responses (*up from 14% last year*)

Applicants who selected seven or more response options were about **4.5x as likely** as non-responders to report being eligible for a Common App fee waiver.

Connecting students to more scholarship opportunities

Through partnerships with Scholarship America and the National Scholarship Providers Association, our scholarships program connects students with scholarship opportunities they're eligible for based on their Common App data, helping scholarship partners better reach and serve underrepresented students.

FY25 PROGRESS



We contributed to a **46% increase** in first-generation applicants to participating Scholarship America partners.



Students matched with a median of **14 opportunities** in 24-25, up from 2 in 23-24.

2

Reinforce and expand relationships and partnerships

Working with partners and allies in the field expands our reach and broadens our impact.

Community colleges

This year, we welcomed our first cohort of community colleges to our platform. As part of Common App's Next Chapter, the organization recommitted to increasing access by closing the gap in low- and middle-income students applying through Common App. Expanding the opportunities available to students on the Common App is one of the many ways the organization is working toward that goal. While the organization has welcomed Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges to its membership before, this is the first targeted effort to include colleges that offer primarily associate-level degrees.

"Illinois community colleges have long served as accessible and affordable entry points into higher education. By joining Common App, these colleges are strengthening their commitment to access, opening new doors for students, and making the pathway to higher education even more seamless and attainable."

-Brian Durham

Executive Director, Illinois Community College Board



State partnerships

To reach our moonshot goal, we need to meet students where they are and inspire them to consider postsecondary opportunities. One of the most effective ways to do that is through our state-level partnerships. We have several in flight that are helping to bring more low- and middle-income students onto the platform.



Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program

Since 2023, we've partnered with the state of Connecticut through the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) to offer tens of thousands of students in the state direct admissions to both public and private institutions through their **Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (CAAP)**. Connecticut high school seniors who meet identified thresholds are eligible to be automatically admitted to participating colleges and universities.

CAAP results

19,393 unique students received a CAAP offer from the 9 participating institutions

172,729 total offers provided to students

21,599 total applications

8,904 unique applicants



Illinois One Click College Admit

In the Spring of 2025, Common App launched a partnership with the state of Illinois through its **One Click College Admit program** to offer thousands of high school seniors in the state direct admissions. One Click College Admit is Illinois' free, quick, and stress-free direct admissions program into the state's participating universities. With only their GPA and permanent home address, students are directly admitted to one or more Illinois public universities and their local community college.

One Click College Admit program results

65,346 unique students received an IL offer from the 8 participating institutions

460,046 total offers provided to students

4,961 total applications

3,246 unique applicants

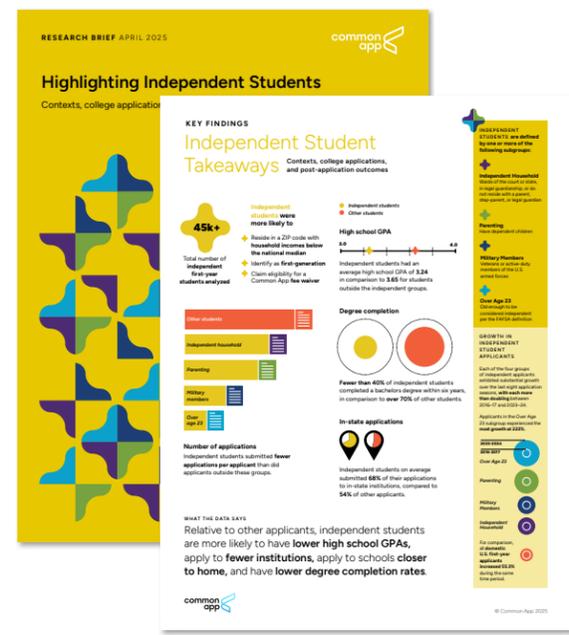
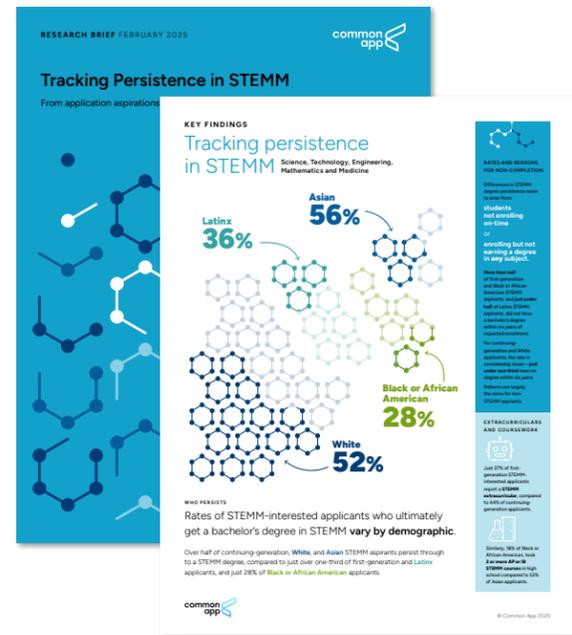
3

Be a leading voice

We are working to use our unique data and voice to engage with audiences, increase brand awareness, and drive actions that increase access to opportunity.

Shining a light on barriers in college admissions through our research

We use our data and conduct research to shine light on promising practices and opportunities, and to raise awareness of barriers in the college application process for underrepresented students—all in real time. These insights help Common App, our member colleges and universities, counselors, and others do more to support students on their way to postsecondary success.



Meeting families where they are

Promoting our work, initiatives and research to national, local, and higher ed media beats all over the country connects us with students and families seeking out guidance on their application processes.



FY 2025 media highlights

- [San Francisco Chronicle](#)
- [Connecticut Public Radio](#)
- [WGAL Harrisburg](#)
- [My Met Media](#)
Denver, Colo.
- [The Tennessean](#)
- [The Washington Informer](#)
D.C.
- [Spectrum News 1](#)
Louisville, Ky.
- [WGBH Boston](#)
- [WGLT.org](#)
- [Ohio Capital Journal](#)
- [Austin American-Statesman](#)
- [WBBJ TV](#)
West Tennessee
- [WSIL TV](#)
Carbondale, Ill.
- [Lafayette Journal & Courier](#)
- [WKMG.org](#)
- [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#)

Reinforcing our impact

Sharing our moonshot progress and providing data as context to the higher education landscape has played a crucial role in gaining recognition and trust in the field.

What they're saying about Common App:

- As the most prominently utilized single application for admission the Common App touches hundreds of thousands of students and families each year...its voice is relevant and impacts the present and future direction of higher ed.*
- Common App again has the unique first-hand ability to be the leading voice in the conversation about college admissions. Their data alone can provide insight into the inequities of students who have access versus those who do not.*
- Common App's data and research is often prominently placed in the Chronicle of Higher Ed, Inside Higher Ed, and also major outlets like the NYT, WSJ, etc. Data speaks and Common App is a leading voice in the conversation.*

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Be excellent to one another in everything we do

In our fully remote environment, connection isn't something that happens by accident; it's something we build with intention. This year, we focused on strengthening how our staff learn, collaborate, and show up for one another across time zones, teams, and levels of the organization.



Celebrating 50 years together

We officially kicked off Common App's 50th anniversary year with moments that brought our community together.

- ◆ During our Spring staff retreat in Las Vegas, Board members and staff kicked off our 50th celebration, capturing stories, perspectives, and reflections.
- ◆ At NACAC 2025, Board members, counselors, Common App members, and staff came together to celebrate 50 years of Common App, reflecting on our shared impact and the work ahead.
- ◆ We also captured staff testimonial videos that highlight the people behind our mission and the values that guide their work each day.

These moments not only celebrated our history but also deepened community across a workforce that collaborates largely online.

Be excellent to one another in everything we do

(continued)

Reimagining connection for a remote workforce

As a fully remote organization since 2020, we continue to refine the ways we communicate and engage with one another. This year, we focused on enhancing the structures and practices that help staff stay informed, aligned, and connected, no matter where they work.

Living our core values

Last year, the Common App team engaged in a collaborative, cross-organizational process to establish our core values: **Responsibility, Growth, Action, Human-centered and Collaboration.**

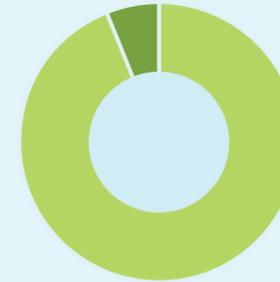
We have circulated those values to where 98% of employees know the company values, and 97% have a good understanding of what the values mean, according to the results of our DEIB staff survey.



FINANCIALS

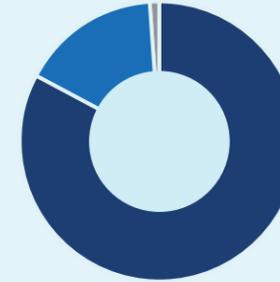
Common App’s mission to advance access, equity, and integrity in the college admissions process has never been more important.

We use our revenue to fund the several initiatives we have underway that are meant to help more students access postsecondary opportunities.



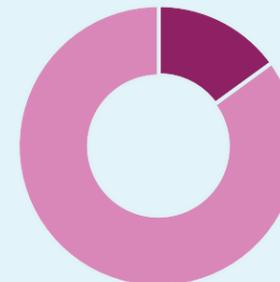
Revenue

	2025	2024
94% Program services	\$62,410,476	\$58,347,823
6% Investment income	\$3,919,474	\$3,567,405
0% Grants and contributions	\$4,757	\$1,248,671
0% Other income	\$0	\$37,500
Total	\$66,334,707	\$63,201,399



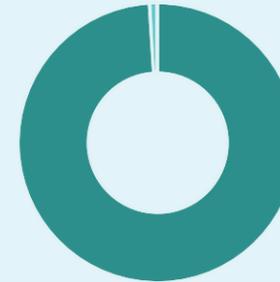
Expenses

	2025	2024
83% Program services	\$44,340,581	\$41,387,844
16% General and administrative	\$8,419,670	\$6,750,373
1% Fundraising	\$314,850	\$275,130
Total	\$53,075,101	\$48,413,347



Liabilities and net assets

	2025	2024
15% Liabilities	\$14,634,432	\$12,954,689
85% Net assets	\$84,578,871	\$71,319,265
Total	\$99,213,303	\$84,273,954



Net assets breakdown

	2025	2024
99% Without donor restrictions	\$84,356,178	\$70,491,028
1% With donor restrictions	\$222,693	\$828,237
Total	\$84,578,871	\$71,319,265

Dear friends,

As always, I'm truly grateful to our members, partners, our counseling community, and the Common App team for the incredible work we've been able to accomplish together in 2025. This year tested our resilience as a community, and I'm very proud of the opportunities we've been able to provide students, especially those from low- and middle-income communities to access postsecondary education.

It was a pivotal year for Common App. We kicked off our 50th birthday! We'll continue to spend the next year not only celebrating how far we've come together, but taking the lessons of the last 50 years from so many leaders in higher education and applying them to the future.

As we forge ahead into 2026, we'll also continue to expand access for those who need it most. We're scaling our initiatives, including a newly launched direct admissions program with over 200 members, a scholarship matching program that has already connected over 1.3 million students with scholarship opportunities, and welcoming more community colleges to our application to help meet students where they are. Our research agenda for the year will explore our counselor population and take another look at students who don't always follow the "traditional" college path.

As we undertake all of this, it's essential to ground ourselves in our purpose. Higher education opens doors for students, and all students deserve that opportunity, regardless of their circumstances.

Warmly,



Jenny Rickard
Chief Executive Officer
Common App



**KICKING OFF
FY26 AND
OUR 50TH
ANNIVERSARY!**

Common App employees and friends gathered to celebrate the Organization's 50th anniversary at the 2025 NACAC conference

