

# TIMELINE: IMPLEMENTING A COLLEGE APPLICATION CAMPAIGN PROGRAM



## SITE COORDINATOR CAMPAIGN EVENT TIMELINE

Although your state's College Application Campaign program may be a specific week or month in the fall, it is important that your site begin planning for the program early, ideally giving yourself at least 8 weeks to plan. Below, you will find a recommended timeline for your College Application Campaign program. The timeline may need to shift based on the dates selected for your state's Campaign program and other nuances of your state's initiative. Most of these tasks will need to be implemented annually so keep this timeline for future reference!

### SPRING OR START OF SCHOOL YEAR

- Register your school/organization for participation in the state's College Application Campaign program.
- During spring course enrollment meetings with juniors, make each student aware of the College Application program and encourage them to begin thinking about and researching the colleges and universities to which they want to apply. To support their research efforts, feel free to point them to the student college application research guides provided on ACAC's website under "[Resources](#)".
- Review the current site coordinator resources provided by your state coordinator.
- Establish a team (school administrators, school counselors, college access personnel, students) to assist with your school's/organization's preparations; host first meeting.
- Add the College Application event date(s) to your school's/organization's master calendar.
- Reserve the computer facilities for your school's/organization's College Application event.
- Ensure you have adequate knowledge of how to obtain fee waivers for those students who are unable to afford the application fees through ACT, College Board, NACAC, or institutional/state level resources. Ask your state coordinator for links to these resources or reference ACAC's Fee Waiver guide provided on ACAC's website under "[Resources](#)".
- Participate in the national #WhyApply Day. Watch ACAC social media or ask your state coordinator for this year's date.

**8 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT, WEEK OF:\_\_\_\_\_**

- Confirm that your school's information is listed correctly on the state's College Application event website. Contact your state coordinator if there are issues.
- Communicate the opportunity to students, families, and the community using information letters available on the ACAC website under [Site Coordinator Resources](#) or as provided by your state coordinator. This is a great way to recruit volunteers!
- Communicate with volunteers for your event using the volunteer resources available under [Site Coordinator Resources](#), or by making announcements at school meetings, PTA/PTO meetings, and/or family nights. If your school has a background check requirement for volunteers, be sure to follow those guidelines.

**7 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF:\_\_\_\_\_**

- Arrange a schedule for your event, including which groups or classes of students will participate at what time. We ask participating host sites to include all students in making a plan for their future. A sample schedule is available on ACAC's website under [Site Coordinator Resources](#).
- If your state is using a web portal for the program, ensure seniors have created web accounts, if applicable.
- Encourage students to begin career, major, and college research. Use websites or apps such as [Encourage](#), [College Board's Big Future](#), [U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard](#), and other appropriate resources.
- Point students to ACAC student worksheets or have them download the [Encourage app](#) to keep track of the information they are gathering. Talk to students about match, fit, and cost, and also about applying to a variety of colleges including at least one local option, as well as reach, target, and likely schools near or far. Utilize ACAC's student college research worksheet and college match and fit toolkit available on our website under [Resources](#). Remember that some students may have multiple pathways for continuing their education after high school in mind. Encourage them to incorporate those plans into their research.
- Review supplemental activities provided in site coordinator resources and determine which activities you want to use to make your school's event fun and exciting.
- Encourage teachers to begin connecting classroom lessons to your College Application program. Utilize ACAC's 10 Ways to Build Excitement for College Application Events resource found on our website under [Site Coordinator - Pre-Event Planning Resources](#).

**6 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF:\_\_\_\_\_**

- Provide application fee waiver information to eligible students. Check with your state coordinator as some provide a statewide fee waiver list for host site coordinators to utilize. Discuss/create worksheet with payment options for students who do not qualify for fee waivers.
- If your state has a web portal for applying, determine which students have not created accounts. Likewise, have students create accounts with Common App if they are applying to institutions that accept that application.
- Begin implementing College Application event supplemental activities. Recommendations are included within ACAC resources page of our website.



- Contact the Mayor's office to have your College Application Day(s) proclaimed. If other schools in your city are hosting events, coordinate with them on the request. A template is available on the ACAC website.

## 5 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

- If applicable, follow-up with those students who have not created a web portal account and those who have not begun college research.
- Discuss the research students have done and where they would like to apply. Ensure they have a nice mix of schools on their list (at least one local, as well as reach, target, and likely schools). We recommend that each student apply to at least four colleges, with the goal of submitting between 4-6 applications. Remind students of ACAC's College Research Worksheet.
- Reconfirm that computer facilities are reserved for the event and that your school's technology coordinator is ready and willing to serve should any technology issues arise.
- Have students download the [Encourage app](#) where students can receive personalized, step-by-step guidance on the college-going process including college matches and scholarship opportunities as well as resources to help students understand how to build a balanced college list.

## 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

- Consider hosting a recommendation letter writing workshop for School or District leads. Encourage them to share with counselors and teachers who are new to the process.
- Inform students they should start on any required essays or personal statements. If possible, work with English teachers to incorporate essay writing into classroom assignments.
- Create a schedule for volunteers, taking into account the availability of your volunteers, as well as breaks and lunch.
- Determine how your school will collect data to track the number of students who participated and the number of applications submitted. Contact your ACAC state coordinator for guidance and state data collection requirements.

## 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

- Remind families of your school's College Application event using a phone tree, blast emails, school newsletters, and/or social media to let them know that their students may need their help to prepare.
- Send a message to your volunteers to give them the details of your event, including when/where to meet.
- If using a web portal to apply, confirm that all seniors have created an account. Follow up with seniors as needed.
- Remind students to continue working on any required essays or personal statements.

## 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

- Send notification to parents/guardians explaining the day and when it is happening so they can help prep their children.
- Remind families that now is the time to have a sit down conversation with their child about the colleges on their list.



- Remind teachers, counselors and administrators of the event schedule and ensure all seniors will have the opportunity to participate.
- Be sure that you have and use event materials provided by the state coordinator.

## 1 WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT, WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

- Make an announcement to remind students that the event is next week, and remind them that they will need to:
  - Know where they would like to apply and remind them of the importance of including a local option, as well as reach, target, and likely schools on their list.
  - Have a plan for application fees and to speak with their school counselor if they believe they qualify for a fee waiver.
  - Remind students to confirm required essays or personal statements are proofed and in final version, and to be sure they can access it from the cloud or as an email attachment.
  - Gather the information needed to complete applications. Some information may need to come from families (residency information, social security number, etc.). Use the ACAC Student Application Worksheet to help them keep track of their information.
- Make final preparations for your event.
- Encourage school staff to wear college clothing on the day(s) of the event.
- Alert your local media about your event. A press release template is available on the ACAC website.
- Use the ACAC Student Application Worksheet to help them keep track of their information.
- Send volunteers a reminder about the event a day or two prior to your event.
- Place a reminder about the event on your school's website home page and share on the school or district's social media channels.
- Confirm all volunteers and staff understand the data collection process.

## YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY!

- Enjoy your college application event!  
Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support!
- Let them know what their role is for the day; ensure they receive a badge or sticker identifying them as a volunteer. Templates and recommended volunteer tasks are available on ACAC's website.
- Eligible students should register for their FSA ID during the College Application event. If your state offers aid for DACA or undocumented students, help them complete necessary steps to prepare for their applications.
- Celebrate students as they complete their applications and prepare for next steps.
- Participating students should "sign-out" of the event and provide the requested information. This is a critical step for proper data collection.
- Ensure students get the Next Steps and FAFSA Completion event handouts - available on ACAC's website - after they apply to college.
- If required by your state coordinator, students, volunteers, and/or site coordinators should complete requested surveys.



## AFTER YOUR EVENT

- Remind students to complete the college application process by ensuring they submit their transcripts, letters of recommendation, and/or college entrance exam scores to the institutions to which they applied.
- Submit any requested data to your state coordinator.
- Communicate the program's impact with the local media. A post-event press release template is available on ACAC's website.
- Thank your volunteers. A sample thank you letter is available in ACAC's resources.
- Follow-up with school team and your state coordinator to share your success!
- Remind students to share where they applied through the host site's data tracking process. Schools may use a sign out sheet or a state specific web portal.



# SITE COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

## PRE-EVENT PREPARATION: FIRST STEPS

- Print and review your state's Site Coordinator Manual and/or resources
- Identify and reserve facilities for the College Application event
- Add College Application event to school calendar
- Identify a School Team to build support and assist with tasks; use Resources Audit template to identify members of team
- Host School Team meeting to discuss implementation of program at your school
- Host workshops at the school or district level to ensure staff and volunteers feel informed in supporting students through recommendation letter writing, building a balanced college match list, and essay writing

## COMMUNICATE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDENTS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- By information letters
- By phone calls or texts
- By social media posts
- By posting information on school website, school newsletter, school marquee

## PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE EVENT

- Focus on activities that encourage students to research and identify schools that are the best fit for them. Use the ACAC College Research Worksheet.
- Sponsor and/or support participation in college fairs or college visits
- Distribute ACAC College Research Worksheet for students to complete before event
- Implement college exploration and preparation assignments in classrooms
- Identify and meet with students eligible for application fee waivers



## IMPLEMENT SCHOOL-WIDE ACTIVITIES TO BUILD AWARENESS AND ENTHUSIASM

- College t-shirt/sweatshirt days
- College wall bulletin boards
- “Ask Me!” signs on offices and classroom doors
- Door decorating contests
- Morning announcements
- Guest speakers
- Family/Student Nights
- Engage underclassmen in school’s College Application Campaign event
- Get active on social media. Join the national #WhyApply Day efforts typically occurring in September of each year

## GET VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED TO ASSIST WITH THE EVENT

- Communicate with volunteers (letter and/or email)
- Assign tasks
- Ensure volunteers have “Ask Me!” stickers

## HOLD COLLEGE APPLICATION EVENT!

- Ensure students receive the 10 Steps document before they begin applying
- Ensure eligible students register for the FSA ID and that all students are prepared to apply for other forms of aid that may be available to them.
- Ensure students sign-out
- Ensure students receive Next Steps, and FAFSA Completion flyers
- Be active on social media! Encourage students to take selfies and post using #IApplied
- Celebrate students with congratulations, high-fives, “I Applied” bulletin boards or assemblies

## POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

- Write thank you letters to volunteers
- Submit data to state coordinator
- Host post-event debrief with school team
- Release post-event press release
- Follow-up with students to ensure they complete the college admissions and financial aid application processes. Help them navigate award letters
- Host College Signing Day celebration

