

COLLEGE MATCH DAY FUNDRAISING GUIDE

WHAT IS COLLEGE MATCH DAY?

College Match Day helps juniors to identify the types of and specific colleges that match and fit their interest and needs and starts the college list building process. This list building process ensures a strong foundation in preparation of students applying to college as seniors and builds students confidence in the process. As part of the school day, College Match Day events will target students that are from low-income families, first-generation students, and underestimated and underrepresented students of color. Starting in 2024, the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) and state and local school partners in five states and four targeted communities across the country, are piloting and testing the efficacy of implementing a College Match Day for high school juniors.

WHY FUNDRAISE FOR COLLEGE MATCH DAY?

IMPROVE YOUR EVENT SUCCESS

Having extra financial support your College Match Day (CMD) event is not essential to the events success, but extra resources can help build excitement for your students and the community. In some cases, your school or community might need additional funds to be able to provide the event for your students. Fundraising can also offer an opportunity beyond additional resources that will advance the goals of the event. Beyond additional dollars, two primary reasons to consider fundraising for the events might be:

Involving The Community

Fundraising, even at small dollars amounts will get people talking, and talking can lead to community support and dialogue. Students will be listening and getting important messages like – that event seems to be important, people and places in my community are investing in my future, and people care about what I am doing next. In addition, you can use fundraising in combination with “friend-raising” for community volunteers, speakers, and supporters.

Leadership Opportunity For Students

Engaging students in the process of fundraising and community involvement in the event is an excellent opportunity to reach areas of your community you might not have considered, as well as giving students leadership opportunities and experiences that can build self-efficacy, self-esteem, and interpersonal communication skills. For some students this opportunity to help their school, peers, and community might just be what they are looking for to test their skills and learn.

This guide will walk you through the basics of fundraising for a local College Match Day event. These tools can be modified for other college access events, as well. The basic ways to raise money are Donations, In-Kind, and Grants. See the steps and templates for each below:



GUIDE TO REQUESTING DONATIONS

A donation is a monetary gift that helps you pay for all or a portion of your program financial needs. Donations can be designated for a certain purpose (restricted) or undesignated (unrestricted). Your organization will have a procedure on how to receive these resources and you should know both the procedure and rules before asking for donations.

When asking for donations to support your programming, it's essential to communicate clearly and professionally. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to approach them:

PREPARATION

1. Identify Potential Partners

- Look for local businesses, organizations, and individuals who have an interest in education, youth, and community development.

2. Understand Their Interests

- Research their involvement in the community and any previous support they've provided to similar initiatives in the community and at your organization. Talk to those who have received donations from the partner to understand how they received the gifts and how to approach the donor.

3. Define Your Needs

- Be specific about how much is being requested and for what purpose.

CRAFTING THE REQUEST

1. Personalize the Request

- Address the letter or email to a specific person, preferably someone in a decision-making position.

2. Introduce Your Organization

- Briefly describe your program and goals.
- Highlight the impact of your programming, particularly on first-generation college students and low-income families.

3. Explain the Need

- Explain how a donation will be used and their importance to your programming's success.

4. Highlight Mutual Benefits

- Show how the partner's contribution will benefit them, such as positive publicity, community goodwill, and potential tax deductions.

5. Include Testimonials and Success Stories

- Share success stories or testimonials that demonstrate the impact of your programming and the difference it makes.

SAMPLE REQUEST LETTER/EMAIL

Letter:

[Full Name, Title]
[Name of Partner]
[Address]
[City, State Zip Code]

Or**Email Subject:**

Support Needed for [College Readiness Program]

[Date]

Both:

Dear [Partner's Title and Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am [your position] at [Your Organization]. We are dedicated to increasing college access and success for first-generation college students and students from low-income families in our community. Our upcoming program, [Program Name/College Match Day], aims to [briefly describe program goals – for example: College Match Day helps juniors to identify the types of and specific colleges that match and fit their interest and needs. As part of the school day, College Match Day will help juniors identify the types of and specific colleges that match their needs to help prepare to apply to college in the fall. The event will target students that are from low-income families, first-generation students, and underestimated and underrepresented students].

Your donation will help to make [College Match Day/Name of Program] a success for our [number of students] who will be participating. We are seeking donations of [specific donation amount]. Your contributions are crucial for [explain how the items will be used and their impact]. [We/The students] are seeking donations of [specific donation amount].

We believe that you share our commitment to education and community development. By supporting our program, you will not only help us achieve our goals but also gain positive recognition within the community. We will proudly acknowledge your contribution through [mention how you will acknowledge their support, such as social media shout-outs, logo placement on materials, press releases, newsletter, mentions at the event, etc.].

Enclosed are some success stories and testimonials from previous participants that highlight the positive impact of our programs.

Thank you for considering our request. I would be happy to discuss this further at your convenience. Please feel free to contact me at [your contact information].

Warm regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Position]
[Your Organization]
[Your Contact Information]



FOLLOW-UP

1. Follow Up

- If you do not receive a response within a week or two, send a polite follow-up email or make a phone call.

2. Acknowledge and Thank Donors

- When you receive contributions, promptly send thank-you letters and acknowledge their support publicly.
- Include partner in any press release about the event, both in the community and the student newspapers.

3. Provide Updates

- Keep your partners informed about the impact of their contributions through newsletters or updates. Send pictures of your students engaging with their in-kind donation.

4. Invite

- Invite the partner to the event to feel the excitement of the students and make asking for the donation even easier next year. Maybe even have them speak at the event, if appropriate.



GUIDE TO REQUESTING IN-KIND DONATIONS

An in-kind donation is a non-cash gift. These contributions can be made in the form of time, services, expertise, and goods. These contributions will have a designated way at your organization on how to receive them and you should become aware of the procedure.

When asking community partners for in-kind items to support your programming, it's essential to communicate clearly and professionally. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to approach them:

PREPARATION

1. Identify Potential Partners

- Look for local businesses, organizations, and individuals who have an interest in education, youth, and community development.

2. Understand Their Interests

- Research their involvement in the community and any previous support they've provided to similar initiatives in the community and at your organization. Talk to those who have received donations from the partner to understand how they received the gifts and how to approach the donor.

3. Define Your Needs

- Be specific about the items or services you need and how they will support your programming.

CRAFTING THE REQUEST

1. Personalize the Request

- Address the letter or email to a specific person, preferably someone in a decision-making position.

2. Introduce Your Organization

- Briefly describe your program and goals.
- Highlight the impact of your programming, particularly on first-generation college students and low-income families.

3. Explain the Need

- Clearly state what in-kind items or services you are requesting.
Explain how these items will be used and their importance to your programming's success.

4. Highlight Mutual Benefits

- Show how the partner's contribution will benefit them, such as positive publicity, community goodwill, and potential tax deductions.

5. Include Testimonials and Success Stories

- Share success stories or testimonials that demonstrate the impact of your programming and the difference it makes.

SAMPLE REQUEST LETTER/EMAIL

Letter:

[Full Name, Title]
[Name of Partner]
[Address]
[City, State Zip Code]

Or

Email Subject:

In-Kind Support Needed for [College Readiness Program]

[Date]

Both:

Dear [Partner's Title and Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am [your position] at [Your Organization]. We are dedicated to increasing college access and success for first-generation college students and students from low-income families in our community. Our upcoming program, [Program Name/College Match Day], aims to [briefly describe program goals – for example: College Match Day helps juniors to identify the types of and specific colleges that match and fit their interest and needs. As part of the school day, College Match Day will help juniors identify the types of and specific colleges that match their needs to help prepare to apply to college in the fall. The event will target students that are from low-income families, first-generation students, and underestimated and underrepresented students].

To make this program a success, we are seeking in-kind donations of [specific items or services needed]. These contributions are crucial for [explain how the items will be used and their impact].

We believe that [Partner's Organization] shares our commitment to education and community development. By supporting our program, you will not only help us achieve our goals but also gain positive recognition within the community. We will proudly acknowledge your contribution through [mention how you will acknowledge their support, such as social media shout-outs, logo placement on materials, etc.].

Enclosed are some success stories and testimonials from previous participants that highlight the positive impact of our programs.

Thank you for considering our request. I would be happy to discuss this further at your convenience. Please feel free to contact me at [your contact information].

Warm Regards,

[Your Full Name]
[Your Position]
[Your Organization]
[Your Contact Information]



FOLLOW-UP

1. Follow Up

- If you do not receive a response within a week or two, send a polite follow-up email or make a phone call.

2. Acknowledge and Thank Donors

- When you receive contributions, promptly send thank-you letters and acknowledge their support publicly.
- Include partner in any press release about the event, both in the community and the student newspapers.

3. Provide Updates

- Keep your partners informed about the impact of their contributions through newsletters or updates. Send pictures of your students engaging with their in-kind donation.

4. Invite

- Invite the partner to the event to feel the excitement of the students and make asking for the donation even easier next year. Maybe even have them speak at the event, if appropriate.



GUIDE TO REQUESTING GRANTS

A grant is generally restricted gift for a specific purposed, outlined in a grant proposal. Grants will have a designated way at your organization on how to receive them and you should become aware of the procedure.

When asking foundations for grants to support your programming, it's essential to communicate clearly and professionally. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to approach them:

PREPARATION

1. Identify Potential Foundations

- Look for local, state, and regional foundations and businesses with a giving program that have an interest in education, youth, and community development. Research the dates for their funding cycles.

2. Understand Their Interests

- Research their involvement in the community and any previous support they've provided to similar initiatives in the community and at your organization. Talk to those who have received grants to understand how to approach the foundation.

3. Define Your Needs

- Prepare a budget that is specific about what you need the money for and how their will support your students.

CRAFTING THE REQUEST

1. Request Funding

- Foundations have different ways they want you to express interest. Some might want you to submit an initial letter (see sample below), a Letter of Intent (LOI) – which is a pre-proposal to ensure your request aligns with their interest, and some might tell you to submit a proposal (see sample below).

2. Make Contact by Introducing Your Organization

- Make contact with a representative of the foundation, by email, phone, or in person (preferred).
- Briefly describe your program and goals.
- Highlight the impact of your programming, particularly on first-generation college students and low-income families.

3. Explain the Need

- Clearly state what resources you are requesting.
- Explain how their help will impact the youth in your community.
- Share success stories or testimonials that demonstrate the impact of your programming and the difference it makes.

Once you get a green light to apply, follow the foundations directions carefully, making sure you turn in all requested items on time in the format that is requested (often online). Read the whole application before starting and first request anything you will need from others in your organization with a deadline that allows you to assemble the grant items in time for submission.

SAMPLE REQUEST LETTER/EMAIL

Letter:**Or****Email Subject:**

[Full Name, Title]

Grant Request [College Readiness Program]

[Name of Partner]

[Address]

[City, State Zip Code]

[Date]

Both:

Dear [Foundation Representative's Name (Formally)],

My name is [Your Name], and I am [your position] at [Your Organization]. We are dedicated to increasing college access and success for first-generation college students and students from low-income families in our community. Our upcoming program, [Program Name/College Match Day], aims to [briefly describe program goals – for example: College Match Day helps juniors to identify the types of and specific colleges that match and fit their interest and needs. As part of the school day, College Match Day will help juniors identify the types of and specific colleges that match their needs to help prepare to apply to college in the fall. The event will target students that are from low-income families, first-generation students, and underestimated and underrepresented students].

To make this program a success, we are seeking a grant of [dollar amount from budget]. These contributions are crucial for [explain how the items will be used and their impact].

We believe that [Foundation's name] shares our commitment to education and youth. By supporting our program, you will not only help [number of students] achieve their education goals. We will proudly acknowledge your contribution through [mention how you will acknowledge their support, such as social media shout-outs, logo placement on materials, etc.].

Enclosed are some success stories and testimonials from previous participants that highlight the positive impact of our programs.

Thank you for considering our request. I would be happy to discuss this further at your convenience. Please feel free to contact me at [your contact information].

Warm Regards,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Position]

[Your Organization]

[Your Contact Information]



TEMPLATE GRANT QUESTIONS

Tell us about your organization/Mission/History

They want to know your mission, history, successes, and basic information about your organization. Include the number of students you serve. Basically, you want to tell them why you are important and what makes your organization essential and/or different.

Sample Language:

Since [Year], [Your Organization] has served [Community] through [Your mission]. In the past [Percentage] of our students have chosen to attend a post-secondary education institution, but we know that we and the community can do better. [Your organization] already participates in the American College Application Campaign since [Year] and that program has raised the number of students applying to college, but we believe more will apply and attend if we help them to define what kind of post-secondary institution is the best match and fit for their desires and goals for their future.

What problem/issue/community need are you addressing?

Here they are asking you to define and prove the problem.

Sample Language:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, high school students are still struggling with making choices about college. Many students continue to make decisions that make it less likely they will attend college and complete college. A class of 2022 study done by San Diego State University's Center for Equity and Postsecondary Education (funded by The Kresge Foundation) found that the COVID-19 pandemic still impacted students in making decisions about college or post-graduation goals. 28% of students reported that COVID-19 has significantly impacted their postsecondary plans. In addition, students see their post-graduation as more than one option and are questioning the value proposition of college. Students report that their most urgent need is the coursework right in front of them, not looking ahead.

Institutions continue to see decreasing and deferred enrollments. Students who delay enrollment are less likely to attend and/or complete a credential (Horn, Cataldi, & Sikora, 2005.) These students are more likely to be from low-income families, first-generation students, and underestimated/underrepresented students of color.

These findings are backed up by the anecdotal reporting of school counselors through the ACAC network. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, high schools and state college access coordinators have struggled to keep students motivated about their plans post graduation. ACAC provides information for students and families in clear steps during senior year, but the network has noticed that waiting until the fall of senior year is too late for many students. National enrollment numbers continue to lag pre-pandemic percentages.

[Your organization] is following that national trend and seeks to increase the percentages of students applying to a post-secondary institution. With [Percentage] of our approximately [Number of students] choosing to apply to a post-secondary institution in [Year], we are seeking to increase that [Aspirational Percentage].



Tell us about your program/project.

Here you will get into the details of what you are planning.

Sample Language:

Our upcoming program, [Program Name/College Match Day], aims to [briefly describe program goals/ College Match Day helps juniors to identify the types of and specific colleges that match and fit their interest and needs. As part of the school day, College Match Day will help juniors identify the types of and specific colleges that match their needs to help prepare to apply to college in the fall. The event will target students that are from low-income families, first-generation students, and underestimated and underrepresented students].

Program goals.

This could be in paragraph or bullet format – check the foundations preference. Here you will be answering how you will know your program is a success.

Sample Language:

- Better prepare high school juniors for postsecondary educational opportunities in their senior year.
- [List additional goals]

Major activities include:

- All participating juniors start building their official college/postsecondary list.
- [List your activities]

What expenses are associated with this project/program?

Foundations are essentially asking for your budget narrative. A budget narrative is a written description of your budget detailed by line item and usually created in an Excel spreadsheet or some other software. Foundations will ask for your actual budget (spreadsheet) as a separate attachment. It is incredibly crucial to make sure that your budget narrative addresses each line in your budget and vice versa, as well as the budget items match what is said in the narrative.

What expenses are associated with this project/program?

Here you will talk about what markers will be shown to measure your projects success.

Sample Language:

[Your organization] anticipates a [percentage] increase in postsecondary applications in senior year. [Your organization] also expects that high school juniors will understand match and fit language in college or postsecondary education selection and complete a college or postsecondary list to be better prepared for senior year applications.

[Your organization] will test the efficacy of the College Match Day program through [1) Surveying participants and school leadership on perceptions and improvements for the project, 2) tabulating college applications for participating juniors in senior year, and ...]



FOLLOW-UP

1. Follow Up

- If you do not receive a response within a week or two, send a polite follow-up email or make a phone call.

2. Acknowledge and Thank Donors

- When you receive grants, promptly send thank-you letters and acknowledge their support publicly.
- Include the foundation in any press release about the event, both in the community and the student newspapers.

3. Provide Updates

- Keep your foundation informed about the impact of their contributions through newsletters or updates.
- Send pictures of your students engaging with the program.

4. Invite

- Invite the foundation representatives to the event to feel the excitement of the students and make future grants easier in upcoming years. Considering asking a foundation representative to speak at the event, if appropriate.

