

APPLY YOURSELF!



**FLORIDA
COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK**

**SITE COORDINATOR PLANNING GUIDE
2015**



research • communication • advocacy • support



WELCOME

Dear Site Coordinator:

On behalf of the Florida College Access Network (FCAN), thank you for hosting a College Application Week at your school or organization!

This is the second year that Florida will be participating in the American College Application Campaign and the first year that FCAN is serving as statewide coordinator for the effort. In November 2014, the Florida Department of Education's GEAR UP program coordinated the program at seven schools. This school year, FCAN is coordinating an expanded pilot with the goal to scale statewide in future years. The Florida School Counselor's Association (FSCA) endorses the initiative. Your school's participation in this pilot is helping to lay the groundwork for a successful initiative for years to come; thank you for being a pioneer!

This guide, along with the resources provided in the online Dropbox folders that accompany it, aims to give an overview of College Application Week and provide the resources you need to successfully implement this initiative at your school.

Please feel free to contact Arianna Pineiro, FCAN's Special Projects Coordinator, at (813) 974-6429 or email apineiro@floridacollegeaccess.org if you have any questions about planning and implementing the event at your school. We will be sure to keep you updated with additional information you may find useful.

We thank you for leading this initiative at your high school. We hope that this is the start of a tradition that that will help to build a college-going culture for ALL Florida students and their families!

Sincerely,

The FCAN Team

Table of Contents

About the Florida College Access Network.....	4
About Florida College Application Week	5
Timeline	7
Building a College-Going Culture	9
Suggested Activities	9
Preparing Your Students	10
Apply Yourself Guide.....	10
Application Fee Waivers	10
Engaging the Community.....	12
Families	12
Volunteers.....	12
Sponsors.....	14
Promoting Your Event.....	15
Traditional Media.....	15
Social Media.....	15
Hosting College Application Week.....	19
Throughout the Week.....	19
Event Day Checklist.....	19
Data Collection.....	21
Data Collection Methods	21
Acknowledgements	22

Supplemental Resources

There are a number of resources available in a special online Dropbox folder to help you plan and implement Florida College Application Week at your school. When these resources are referenced throughout this guide, they will be highlighted *like this*. For access to the Dropbox folder, contact Arianna Pineiro at apineiro@floridacollegeaccess.org.



Building a College-Going Culture

- Ask Me About It! Poster
- College BINGO



Preparing Your Students

- Apply Yourself Guide
- Fee Waiver Handout
- The Great College Application Adventure
- Florida College and University Deadlines



Engaging the Community

- Student/Parent Information Letter
- Student/Parent Follow-Up Letter
- Volunteer Recruitment Letter
- Volunteer Reference Guide
- Volunteer Thank You Letter
- Business Outreach Phone Script
- Donation Request Letter
- Sponsor Thank You Letter



Promoting Your Event

- Sample Press Release
- Sample Newsletter Article



Fliers



Hosting Your Event

- Instruction Sheet



Data Collection

- Sign-Out Sheet
- Excel Sign-Out Sheet

About the Florida College Access Network

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is a statewide network of leaders, organizations, educators, and individuals who are collectively committed to dramatically increasing postsecondary opportunities for all Florida students—especially students traditionally underrepresented in higher education, such as low income students and those who are the first in their families to go to college.

Our Mission: To create and strengthen a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to improve college and career readiness, access, and completion for all students.

Our Vision: At least 60% of working-age Floridians will hold a high-quality post-secondary degree or credential by the year 2025.

Our Guiding Values:

- **College is postsecondary education.** Florida College Access Network uses the term “college” to refer to the attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including technical certificates and academic degrees.
- **College readiness is career readiness.** All Florida students deserve to receive a high-quality PreK-12 education which prepares them academically for success in college or a career.
- **College is for everyone.** All Florida students deserve the opportunity to pursue a high-quality postsecondary education that prepares them to effectively communicate, engage, and compete in the 21st century knowledge-based global economy.
- **College is a public good.** Postsecondary educational opportunity and attainment are critical to a just and equitable society, strong democracy, robust economy, and healthy communities.
- **Reaching Goal 2025 will require collective action.** Accelerating high-quality degree production in Florida to meet Goal 2025 requires strategic partnerships and active involvement from all sectors.

About Florida College Application Week

What is Florida College Application Week?

Florida College Application Week is part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a national initiative that aims to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing a college degree or other higher education credential. It does this by **helping high school seniors navigate the complex college admissions process** and **ensuring that they apply to at least one postsecondary institution** (2-year or 4-year college, certificate program, or vocational school). Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is serving as the statewide coordinator of the event beginning with the 2015 – 16 school year.

When is Florida College Application Week?

Schools may designate **any week in October** as their College Application Week. Often, the application event itself is held over one or more days during this week, depending on the school's size and computer lab availability. The rest of the week may be dedicated to fun activities to build a college-going culture, as well as to ensure that seniors are prepared to apply during the event itself.

How do schools celebrate College Application Week?

During College Application Week, schools **dedicate time and space during the normal school day to a college application event**. At these events, students will have the opportunity to fill out their college applications with the support of trained volunteers from the school and community.

The event should be **open to all graduating seniors**, with a special focus on engaging first-generation students, students from low-income families, and students who may otherwise not apply to college.

While the application event is focused on graduating seniors, many schools take advantage of this opportunity to **create a college-going culture for all students**.

What this looks like in practice will vary from school to school. However, the following is just one example of a successful College Application Week:

- Leading up to the school's College Application Week, teachers or school counselors make the Apply Yourself Guide available to students. As part of morning announcements leading up to the event, seniors are reminded about the steps they need to take before completing their applications, such as gathering needed documents, qualification for fee waivers, letters of recommendation, etc.
- During College Application Week, the school emphasizes activities that build a college-going culture for all students, such as a "College T-Shirt Day." Such activities build excitement around the event and also impact younger students' college aspirations.
- For one or more days during College Application Week, the computer lab is open in shifts to seniors, and trained volunteers from the school and/or community are on hand to answer last-minute questions about the application process and otherwise assist students. As students leave, they complete a sign-out sheet and receive an "I Applied!" sticker that they are encouraged to wear

proudly the rest of the day. The school might also provide other “giveaways” to participating students, offer door or raffle prizes, etc.

- After the event, the school sends in the data they collected on the sign-out sheets to FCAN, which FCAN will compile and share with the national organization. This data is critical to document the outcomes and overall success of the initiative both at the school and statewide.

What are our responsibilities?

While schools are welcome to adapt their Florida College Application Week events to meet their students’ needs, we ask participating schools to commit to the following:

Core Commitments

- ❑ Designate a site coordinator as the primary point person for your event.
- ❑ Dedicate time and space (such as the school computer lab) during normal school hours in which all graduating seniors will have the opportunity to successfully submit at least one application.
- ❑ Keep a record of the number of students who completed applications and how many each student completed, and report key data to FCAN.

Recommended Commitments

- ❑ Identify a school-wide team to support the site coordinator in implementing the event. This may include school staff as well as community volunteers.
- ❑ Engage families and the local community, making sure college is a topic of conversation both inside and out of school.
- ❑ Create a college-going culture for all students through activities leading up to the event.
- ❑ Ensure students are prepared to participate prior to the event (for example, through access to resources and support for researching colleges that match their interests and talents; assistance with the preparation of admissions essays; and support for gathering the supplemental materials needed to complete their applications).
- ❑ Follow up with students after the event to ensure that applications are complete.

What support will we receive?

FCAN is committed to supporting schools as they plan and implement this exciting event. Site coordinators will be provided with a comprehensive toolkit including this **planning guide, select promotional materials (such as “I Applied” stickers and posters), templates (such as for flyers and parent letters) and student resources, such as the student guide**. FCAN, in partnership with ACAC, will also offer **trainings** for site coordinators and a PowerPoint for volunteer training that site coordinators can adapt for their needs. Throughout the process, FCAN’s special projects coordinator will be available to answer questions and provide technical assistance, for example, assistance with volunteer recruitment and data collection.

Timeline

This is a suggested timeline for planning your event. Please feel free to adjust the dates and tasks to fit your school best.

7+ Weeks Before Your Event:

- Commit to hosting a College Application Week event and designate a site coordinator.
- Submit Registration Form to FCAN.
- Participate in an in-person or virtual Site Coordinator Training hosted by FCAN when it is offered. This may be later than 7+ weeks before your event, depending on when your event is held.
- Build a school-wide team to support the site coordinator in planning and implementing College Application Week.
- Confirm potential event dates with school's master calendar and technology team, and reserve the computer lab as early as possible.
- Set a final date for your school's College Application Week, and inform FCAN.

6 Weeks Before Your Event:

- Brainstorm College Application Week activities and schedule for your school, based on the suggestions included throughout this guide.
- Create a plan for how you will promote the event, both inside and outside of your school. Begin promoting your event as early as possible. See the "Promoting Your Event" section of this guide for more details.
- Develop a plan to reach out to local businesses for sponsorships or in-kind donations (such as pizza, raffle prizes, giveaways like flash drives and pens, etc.). With your event team, brainstorm a list of businesses to approach and decide who will take the lead.

5 Weeks Before Your Event:

- Finalize your College Application Week schedule.
- Decide how many volunteers you will need for your event. We recommend having at least three volunteers on hand to work with each group of 20-25 students. If necessary, discuss volunteer recruitment options with FCAN.
- Begin outreach to businesses that might be interested in sponsoring your event.
- Begin preparing students for the event. Print and distribute the *Apply Yourself Guide* to students and encourage students to begin researching colleges.

4 Weeks Before Your Event:

- Make a list of all the supplies you will need for your event and begin collecting supplies.
- Begin recruiting volunteers for your event. These might include school faculty and staff, student leaders, parents, and/or community members. Make sure to allow ample time to complete background checks and to comply with other school rules for outside volunteers.

- ❑ Continue promoting your event within the school through announcements, parent newsletter, school newspaper, etc.

3 Weeks Before Your Event:

- ❑ Estimate how many students will need application fee waivers and make necessary arrangements for these students. For more information, see the “Preparing Your Students” section of this guide.
- ❑ Create a schedule for volunteers; be sure to allow for lunch or other breaks.
- ❑ Send home the *informational letter* included in the Dropbox to remind student and parents that College Application Week is coming up.

2 Weeks Before Your Event:

- ❑ Finalize volunteer list and ensure that all volunteers have had necessary background checks to assist at the school. Share time and place of the event with volunteers as you confirm their participation.
- ❑ If you plan to promote to local media, send out a press release or media advisory. Before sending out press releases, be sure to check with your principal to ensure they comply with district rules.

1 Week Before Your Event:

- ❑ Ensure all event supplies are ready.
- ❑ Remind volunteers of the time and place of the event and confirm their attendance. If distributing the *volunteer resource guide*, share with volunteers now. If holding a training in advance, schedule it for this week.
- ❑ Remind teachers, counselors, and administrators of the next week’s activities and schedule. Encourage them to participate in any “college-going culture” activities planned.
- ❑ Remind students and families to be prepared for College Application Week by completing the worksheets included in the *Apply Yourself Guide*.
- ❑ Also remind students that they will need a form of payment (if they do not have a fee waiver) to complete their application. Most often, a credit card is the preferred form of payment, but often a check by mail will be accepted.

College Application Week:

*** See the “Hosting College Application Week” section of this guide for more details.

After Your Event:

- ❑ Follow up with students who need to submit fee waivers.
- ❑ Using the templates included in the Dropbox, send *thank you letters* to volunteers and businesses that have supported your event. These letters should be sent no more than a week after the event, and should provide some basic data reflecting the success of your event.
- ❑ Send *follow up letter* to participating students and their families to congratulate them on being one step closer to attending college! Remind them to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before their college’s FAFSA deadline.
- ❑ Submit College Application Week data to FCAN.

BUILDING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

Students whose parents, schools, and communities demonstrate high expectations that college is their next step after high school view college as a “given.” However, for students who do not experience such expectations, encouragement or support, college may seem unrealistic or out of reach.

College Application Week provides a great opportunity to celebrate and build excitement around the college going process for all students. The following suggestions are just some of the ways your school can take advantage of this opportunity to build a college going culture and make College Application Week an event that all students, seniors and underclassmen alike, can participate in.

Suggested Activities

“Ask Me About It!”

- **Activity:** Have the entire faculty and staff display an 8 ½ x 11 poster that lists their alma mater(s) on their doors or in their classrooms.
- **Purpose:** Encourage students to ask faculty and staff about their college experience, the application process, etc.
- **Preparation:** Email the sample *“Ask Me About It!” Poster* to all faculty and staff and designate a posting date.

College Bingo Activity

- **Activity:** Have students identify faculty/staff members that have had the different college experiences included in the sheet. To add more excitement to the game, award a prize to the first students to win.
- **Purpose:** Engages students in conversations with faculty and staff about their college experiences, helps students understand the diversity of college experiences.
- **Preparation:** Print and distribute *“College Bingo” Sheet* to students in each home room, and set one or more days in which students can play.

Other Activities

- Encourage students and staff to wear college apparel on one day during College Application Week.
- During announcements, include a college trivia question or fight song guessing game.
- Create a “College Wall” where students can highlight the institutions where they plan to apply, or where they have been accepted.

PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS

One of the most important factors in your event's success is whether students are prepared with all the information necessary to complete a college application. Students should come into the application event knowing which schools they are interested in applying to, what the requirements for those schools are, and the information they need to complete the application. It is highly encouraged that you take steps in advance of your event to ensure that students are prepared with this information.

Apply Yourself Guide

In addition to this guide for site coordinators, FCAN has produced the *Apply Yourself Guide* for students to help prepare them for College Application Week. This guide aims to help students choose colleges to apply to, gather the information they need to apply, and consider next steps after applying.

We highly recommend you make this guide available to your students, as either an electronic or paper copy, about a month before College Application Week. This will give them time to take advantage of the included resources. It may also be helpful to remind students to complete specific parts of the guide as College Application Week approaches.

Application Fee Waivers

One way you can help students be ready to apply is to inform students about the possibility of obtaining a fee waiver. With the average application fee now around \$35, applying to several colleges can be expensive for many students, and they might not know that they may be eligible for a fee waiver.

Who is eligible for a fee waiver?

Typically, fee waivers are available to students for whom the college application fees would create a financial burden or hardship. Students who were eligible for fee waivers to college entrance exams, such as the SAT or ACT, are usually also eligible for college application fee waivers.

What kinds of fee waivers are there?

ACT Fee Waiver

ACT provides a fee waiver application in their *ACT User Handbook for Educators* publication, link below, which can be used at many schools. Students who are eligible for and used a fee waiver to the ACT college entrance exam are also eligible for this type of college application fee waiver. School counselors need only print out the number of fee waivers needed and sign-off on student eligibility. Students must also sign the form. The fee waiver may be found on page 37 at: <http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/ACT-UserHandbook.pdf>

College Board Fee Waiver

Students who have received a College Board fee waiver for the SAT or the SAT subject tests may also be eligible for up to four college application fee waivers. Students should receive their college application fee waivers at the beginning of their senior year through their SAT accounts. College Board fee waivers will no longer require school counselor approval.

More information on the College Board fee waiver can be found here:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/applications/fee-waivers>

The College Board also provides additional information including a link to which colleges accept the College Board application fee waiver here: <http://www.sat.org/fee-waivers>

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Fee Waiver

This fee waiver can be downloaded from NACAC's website, provided below. Students must complete their portion of the fee waiver request and a school counselor or TRIO representative must verify that a student is eligible to use the form (a list of eligibility requirements are provided on the NACAC website and on the fee waiver request – students must meet only one of the requirements to be eligible). NACAC recommends that students receive no more than four fee waivers for the college application process. Additional information on the NACAC fee waiver can be found on their website here:

<http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/feewaiver/Pages/default.aspx>

Which schools accept fee waivers?

Most state universities in Florida accept all three types of fee waivers. Please reference the *Fee Waiver Handout* in the Dropbox for information on the policies of each university on which fee waivers they accept, and how the waiver should be submitted. This guide is also included in the Apply Yourself Guide.

For schools not within the state university system, encourage students to contact the admissions office to find out if fee waivers are accepted.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Families

By keeping families informed and engaged, you can increase the chances that students are prepared for College Application Week and make college a topic of conversation at home, as well as at school.

In the Dropbox, you will find a *Student/Parent Information Letter* and a *Student/Parent Follow-Up Letter*. Send out the Information Letter before your event to strike up conversations between students and their families about College Application Week, to recruit parent volunteers, and inform the school community of activities to promote a college going culture in your school. The Follow-Up Letter can be sent following your event to congratulate students and families and to encourage them to take the necessary next steps.

Disseminate via hard copy and /or email. You can also send out automated phone messages and use whatever other channels of communication your school has available.

Volunteers

An enthusiastic group of volunteers is an essential part of a successful College Application Week. **We recommend having at least one site coordinator and three volunteers and/or school staff on hand at all times when working with a group of 20-25 students.** In addition to the very real support they provide as students complete their applications, engaging volunteers in the process helps build a college-going culture in the community as well as the school.

Potential Volunteer Tasks

There are many ways volunteers can take part in making your College Application Week event a success, depending on their skills and interests. The following are just some ways your school might use volunteers:

- Leading up to College Application Week, volunteers can help students with their admissions essays.
- Help to seek sponsors from the business community in advance of the event.
- Post directional signs in the school for the event. Good signage is key to reminding students of the event and getting them to the right place.
- Help students log on to/access the specific college/university website and begin an application. If some students are using paper applications, volunteers can hand out the correct applications.
- Guide students through the college application process and help answer any questions students may have, regardless of where the student wishes to apply.
- Monitor printers to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed.
- Remind students to complete the sign-out sheet before leaving and monitor the sign-out station.

Volunteer Recruitment

- 1) Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your College Application Week event a success by donating time and/or resources. Some examples may include:
 - School Alumni
 - Student families, PTA (Parent Teacher Association)
 - Volunteer, civic, or church groups
 - Community College and University faculty, student organizations, admissions office, community engagement office, and financial aid representatives
 - Business, community, and local government leaders
 - Youth programs (i.e., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way)
- 2) Send potential volunteer groups the Florida College Application Week *Volunteer Recruitment Letter* included in the Dropbox.
- 3) When promoting your College Application Week event, always mention the need for volunteers in your communication.
- 4) Reach out to student leaders in your school. For example, students who have already completed their application(s) could help other students during the event and be called the “college application ambassadors.”
- 5) Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Depending on your school district’s policy, you may need to conduct a background check.

Volunteer Training

To ensure your volunteers are prepared to help students at your event, plan on holding a volunteer training either the week before or the day(s) of your event. If you hold the training in advance of your event, you will have the option of holding the training in person or via webinar. FCAN will provide a training PowerPoint, as well as a sample agenda for your training. For additional technical assistance with volunteer training, please contact the Special Projects Coordinator.

Volunteer Management

Before your event

- 1) Identify specific responsibilities and duties for your volunteers. For example, you may create shifts for greeting, sign-in, computer lab, other activities, etc. Create a short explanation of each responsibility for volunteers to follow throughout the day.
- 2) Finalize a volunteer list and, as a reminder, send out the *Volunteer Reference Guide* notifying volunteers of event details.

Day of your event

- 1) Provide name tags for volunteers on the day of the event.
- 2) Conduct a quick orientation the morning of the event.
- 3) Provide water and snacks for volunteers, especially if they will be there for more than two hours.

Follow-up

Send out the *Volunteer Thank You Letter* to all volunteers for their dedication to Florida College Application Week!

Sponsors

College Application Week is designed to be a low- to no-cost event for schools to adopt. Even if your school is interested in providing food or prizes, you can keep costs down by asking local businesses to sponsor your event. Often times, local businesses are very willing to donate goods or services such as gift certificates or food instead of a straight cash donation.

In the Dropbox, you will find a *Business Outreach Phone Script*, *Donation Request Letter* and *Sponsor Thank You Letter* to use in your outreach to potential sponsors and to thank sponsors for their generosity.

PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

Communication is key to successful outreach! Early on in the planning process, consider all the tools you have at your disposal to spread the word about your event (school website, newsletters, local news media, social media, etc.) and develop a plan for how you'll use them. The following are just some ideas you might consider.

Traditional Media

The media is an excellent tool for publicizing your College Application Week event and for sharing your school's college-going celebrations with the community. A variety of media channels can be utilized to spread the word about your specific event (i.e., television stations, radio, newspapers, community newsletters, etc.).

In the Dropbox, you'll find a *Sample Press Release* that you can use to inform the media about your event. While this press release is to be sent out in advance of the event, you may also choose to send out a press release following your event detailing your successes! Of course, check with your principal to make sure that the release complies with your school district's media policy.

Also included is a *Sample Newsletter Article*, which you might edit and include in a community or school newsletter in advance of your event.

Social Media

Social media is the perfect place to leverage excitement with students, parents, and community members as your school's College Application Week approaches.

Many students use social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram daily, so use these networks to get students to think about where they want to go to school and what they are doing to get there. Social media is also a great medium to answer questions or speak to concerns that students have.

Quick Tips:

Post an announcement asking for help!

In a world of busy email and voicemail inboxes, social media is another avenue to reach out to parents and volunteers for help with your event. As you look for volunteers, consider using Facebook to reach out to parents and other community members and get them involved.

Provide links to helpful resources

Social media has become the first place students, and now many others, look for the latest news and information. Why should helpful college preparation resources be excluded?

Share links to resources that will help students with the college research and selection process like youcango.collegeboard.org, bigfuture.collegeboard.org, and FloridaShines.org.

Provide links to help with the financial aid process (how to apply for the FAFSA), as well as upcoming SAT and ACT dates prior to the event.

Inform students about fee waivers for standardized testing and college applications.

On all social media, use hashtags #!

Hashtags (known to some as the pound sign) are an easy way to search for posts around a similar theme. They can be used on a variety of social media tools and aren't exclusive to a particular one. We recommend the use of pre-selected hashtags (especially #IApplied, #CollegeAppWeek, and #ApplyYourselfFL) embedded in or at the end of content you post. Simply note your chosen hashtags on posters, flyers, Facebook, and other marketing materials and social media sites. Consider creating a hashtag specific to your school, so you can easily search for the hashtag, repost and share specific College Application Week happenings at your school (e.g., "ApplyYourselfPanthers" or "OHSCollegeApplicationWeek").

Disperse fliers on social media networks

Most social media networks allow for photos and images to be uploaded or attached to written posts, while Instagram specializes in picture sharing. Disseminate fliers about the event on social media. We've created *fliers* you can share as is or modify as you see fit.

"Share" the excitement!

Show students, teachers, community members and organizations that you appreciate their support and hard work by sharing, reposting or "retweeting" content they post about the College Application Week happenings at your school.

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram Strategies:

To date, Facebook and Twitter remain the top two social media tools utilized by today's youth. Instagram is a close third. Below we provide tips and strategies for using all three.

Facebook:

Post at least 3 times a week leading up to important dates and deadlines. It is important to post items that will engage the audience and encourage them to participate in the conversation. Open-ended questions and asking for opinions are good ways to initiate dialogue.

Facebook examples:

Seniors! Don't forget College Application Week is next week. Tell us where you are applying!
#ApplyYourselfFL

Seniors, it's Florida College Application Week. Have you applied yet? If so, give tips to your fellow students! #ApplyYourselfFL

Congratulations seniors on completing your #college applications! #IApplied
#ApplyYourselfFL

Remember seniors: Plan for #CollegeAppWeek in October. For free help with your #college app, join the event here (INSERT LINK TO EVENT).

Did you know you could qualify for a college application fee waiver? Come to the (NAME OF OFFICE) to find out more! #ApplyYourselfFL

Congrats (INSERT ABBREVIATION OF HIGH SCHOOL) seniors! You've officially applied to #college! #Iapplied!

It's College Application Week! Have a question about the application process? Ask us!
#CollegeAppWeek

Need help deciding where to apply? Ask your school counselor or check out
bigfuture.collegeboard.org and FloridaShines.org #ApplyYourselfFL #CollegeAppWeek

(HIGH SCHOOL NAME) teachers, parents, and alums, tell us where you went to college!!

"Apply" yourselves seniors! It's #CollegeAppWeek!

Didn't take the SAT or ACT? You can still #ApplyYourself. All FL state/community colleges are open admission and many colleges are test optional. Ask your school counselor for more info!

Create a College Application Week Event on Facebook

Invite parents and community members to participate in your College Application Week event using the Facebook event function. This is a great way to stimulate interest around your event and gauge how many plan to participate. Additionally, Facebook events allow you to easily send attendees important information updates and messages all at once.

Twitter:

Twitter has a limit of 140 characters per post. To leave space for users to retweet your post and add a comment, try to keep posts to 120 characters or less. Ask students to use the hashtag #IApplied and #ImGoingToCollege and have them announce where they applied.

Twitter examples:

Hey seniors, don't forget College Application Week is next week! #CollegeAppWeek
#ApplyYourselfFL

"Apply" yourselves seniors! It's #CollegeAppWeek!

It's FL #CollegeAppWeek! Remember to send in transcripts, test scores, and essays along with your applications. #ApplyYourselfFL

Congrats seniors on completing your college apps! #IApplied #CollegeAppWeek

Did you know you might qualify for a college application fee waiver? Ask your school counselor how! #ApplyYourselfFL

Deadline to register for October 3rd SAT is Sep. 3. Get your tests, transcripts and essays ready for #CollegeAppWeek. #ApplyYourselfFL

No SAT or ACT? No Problem! You can still #ApplyYourself. All FL state colleges are open admission and many private colleges are test optional

Instagram:

Although Instagram is not as widely used as Facebook and Twitter, it is a perfect avenue for sharing pictures from your event. Instagram can be linked to multiple social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter, making it easy to share photos on all networks instantaneously.

Consider sharing pictures of:

- Students as they submit their college applications
- An activity to take place on campus encouraging students to stop by.
- Teachers and volunteers along with a quote about their college experiences.
- Students themselves along with a quotation about how they feel before or after submitting their college applications.
- Students wearing their "I Applied" sticker.
- Celebrities who have been to college, along with the name of their degree-granting institution and field of study.
- Inspirational college/education related quotations and photos.

Provide incentives for students to post or re-post information about your school's College Application Week event on social media. As mentioned earlier, creating a customized hashtag for your high school and College Application week event is one way to easily search what your students are posting. Encourage on fliers and during morning announcements for students to participate in a weeklong social media contest or scavenger hunt using the custom hashtag.

Encourage students to share:

- A picture of their dream college
- A photo of themselves submitting an application
- A picture of themselves doing college research
- A picture of them with an "I applied" sticker.

HOSTING COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK

Throughout the Week

While your school might dedicate one or more days for students to actually apply to colleges, we encourage you to celebrate the college-going process throughout the week. This is a great time to implement some of the activities suggested in the “Building a College-Going Culture” section, if you haven’t already.

The days leading up to your event are also a great time to remind students to be prepared to apply on your event day. By this point, students should have received their Apply Yourself Guide and worked on the included checklist and worksheets. Some other reminders you may want to share with your students include the following:

- Some applications will require an admission essay or a personal statement. Remind students to bring their completed essay(s) with them, on a USB or by emailing it to themselves.
- A credit card will be required for colleges or universities with application fees. Some schools may also allow payment by check or e-check. Remind students to check what kind of payment is required for their school, and bring the appropriate payment method with them on the event day.
- Remind students that information about their addresses and parents will be used to determine tuition and residency.
- Students may question information they are asked to supply about their addresses and parents’ residency (i.e., in-state or out-of-state). This private information, such as their SSN, will only be reported to the college(s) where they apply.

Event Day Checklist

Before Students Arrive

- Have refreshments for volunteers set up before volunteers are expected to arrive.
- Ask volunteers to arrive 15-20 minutes before the activity begins, to give time for the orientation and any last minute preparations. If you plan on holding a full training on the day of your event, have the volunteers come in 45-50 minutes early.
- Ensure that the computer lab or other event space is ready. Make sure computers and printers are on and working, set up a sign-out station, and hang any signage and/or decorations.

As Students Arrive

- ❑ Make sure each student receives an *instruction sheet*.
- ❑ Students should have with them: a completed College Application Worksheet, essay (if needed), and other required supplemental materials.
- ❑ Encourage students to find a seat and start the application process quickly, to be sure they have enough time to complete an application.

As Students Complete & Submit Applications

- ❑ As students apply, have volunteers/school staff available to monitor and help any students that are having difficulties.
- ❑ Remind students to print out confirmation page as they finish their application.
- ❑ Once students have finished their application(s), direct students to the sign-out station where they will complete the sign-out sheet and receive an “I Applied!” sticker.
- ❑ If your school will be hosting a FAFSA completion event (FAFSA Night, College Goal Sunday), hand out a flyer reminding students of your upcoming event.

DATA COLLECTION

Site coordinators are expected to track and submit data to FCAN on the number of students who started or completed applications, number of applications completed, and colleges to which students applied. FCAN, in turn, will compile this information for all participating sites to report to the American College Application Campaign. The data is used not only to celebrate your successes, but to track efforts over time to ensure College Application Week is fulfilling its intended purpose: to encourage more low-income students, first generation college-going students, and students who otherwise wouldn't have considered college to complete at least one college application.

For privacy reasons, we request that the data you submit to FCAN **not** include student names. However, we highly recommend that schools collect and save student-level data. Short term, this will allow your school to follow up with students after they submit their application, ensuring the application process is complete and encouraging them to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Long term, you can use your school's data to evaluate whether students who participate in College Application Week are more likely to enroll in college and complete a degree.

Data Collection Methods

(Option 1) Senior Sign-Out Sheets

In the Dropbox, you will find a *Sign-Out Sheet* template, which you can print up and have students complete before leaving the computer lab. You may want to set up a table where students will sign out and receive an "I Applied!" sticker, much like voters do at the polls after completing their ballots.

After the event, enter the data from the Sign-Out sheets into the Excel Sign-Out Sheet provided. Save one copy that includes all the information for the school to keep. Then, delete columns B and C (First Name and Last Name), and save a second copy of the sheet as "SCHOOL NAME – Sign Out Sheet." This version of the Excel spreadsheet should be sent to FCAN no later than December 1st, 2015.

(Option 2) Excel Sign-Out Sheet

You also have the option of having students enter their information directly into the *Excel Sign-Out Sheet*. Designate one or more computers as the sign-out area, with the Excel spreadsheet open on each and have a volunteer on hand to make sure students complete the sign out sheet and receive an "I Applied" sticker.

After the event, save one copy of each of the spreadsheets for the school's records. Then, for each spreadsheet, delete columns B and C (First Name and Last Name), and save a second copy of the sheet as "SCHOOL NAME – Sign Out Sheet," numbering them if there are multiple files. This version should be sent to FCAN no later than December 1st, 2015.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide has been adapted from materials originally produced by the **American College Application Campaign (ACAC)** and by **Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)**. A special thanks to both ACAC and MCAN for permission to adapt this guide for use in Florida, as well as their guidance on the process.

Florida College Access Network would also like to thank the **Helios Education Foundation**, whose support made this project possible.

Thank you for hosting
College Application Week!