



APPLY YOURSELF FLORIDA

2018-19

Site Coordinator Toolkit

ACAC
American College Application Campaigns

FLORIDA
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

Table of Contents

<u>Dear Reader</u>	1
<u>Introduction</u>	2
<u>Preparing Students</u>	7
<u>Event Planning</u>	14
<u>Community Outreach</u>	20
<u>Promoting Your Event</u>	25
<u>After Your Event</u>	28
<u>Acknowledgments</u>	31

Dear Reader,

On behalf of Florida College Access Network (FCAN), thank you for participating in Apply Yourself Florida for the 2018-19 school year! This initiative would not be possible without the work of schools like yours across the state.

Apply Yourself Florida is part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC). ACAC is a national effort to increase the number of low-income and first-generation college students who apply to at least one college or career school. Participating schools dedicate time and space during the normal school hours where students have the opportunity to submit an application to the school of their choice with the help of dedicated volunteers.

This guide gives an overview of Apply Yourself Florida and provides resources to help you implement the initiative. [You can find additional resources here.](#)

Please share your successful strategies with us! Much of what makes this toolkit helpful is the many successful strategies shared with us from schools like yours around the state. Your story will help fellow coordinators host impactful programs at their schools! We may even feature your achievements throughout the campaign on our blog or social media !

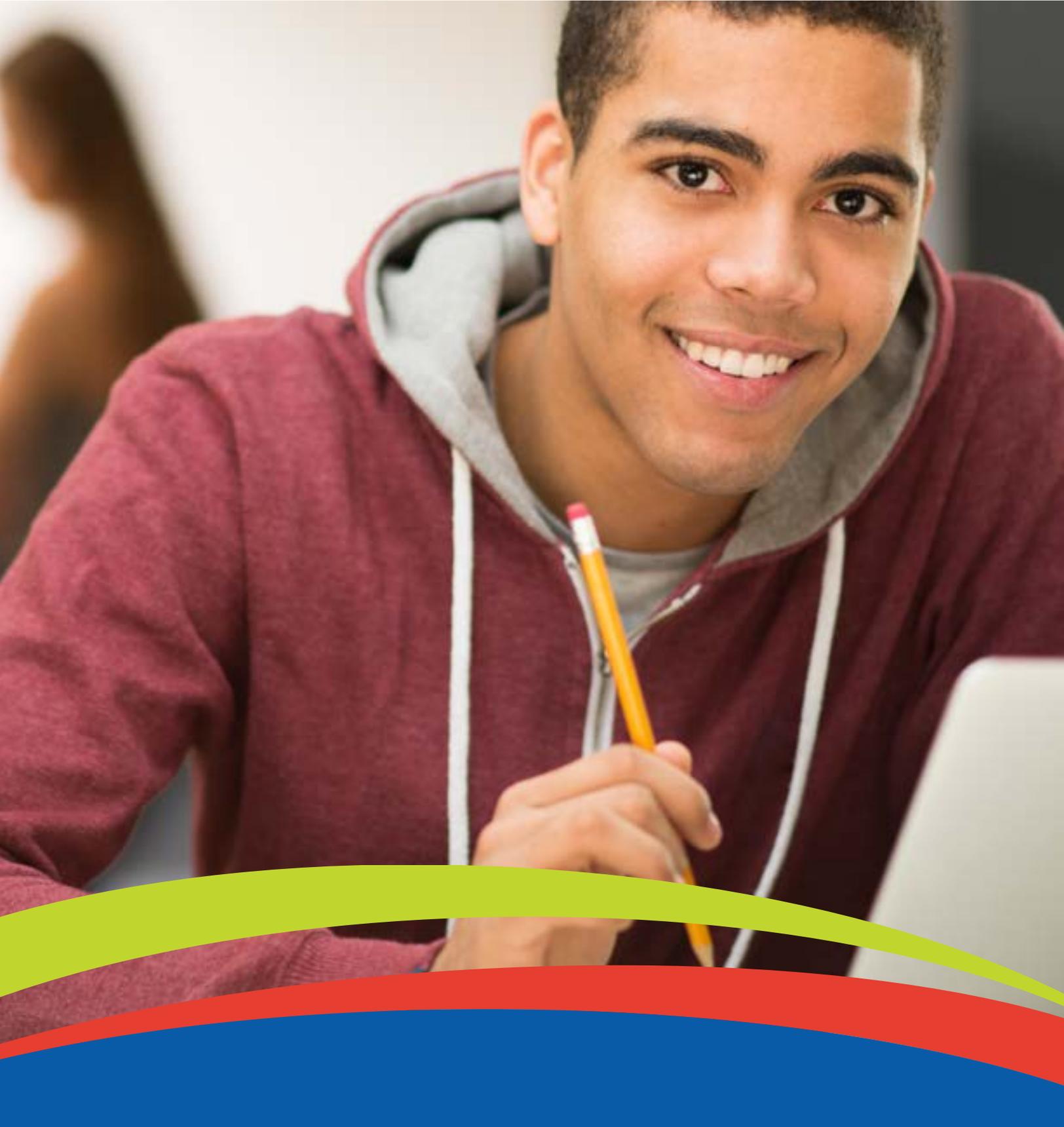
Contact our Community Engagement and Programs Manager, Amy Bolick, at abolick@floridacollegeaccess.org or at (813) 974-6429 with questions and suggestions.

**FCAN thanks the Helios Education Foundation
for its generous support of Apply Yourself Florida**



Introduction

About FCAN & Apply Yourself Florida



About 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.



Amy Bolick

**Florida College Access Network
Statewide Programs Coordinator**

abolick@floridacollegeaccess.org

813-974-6429

@abolick_FCAN

Does Everyone Need to Go to College?

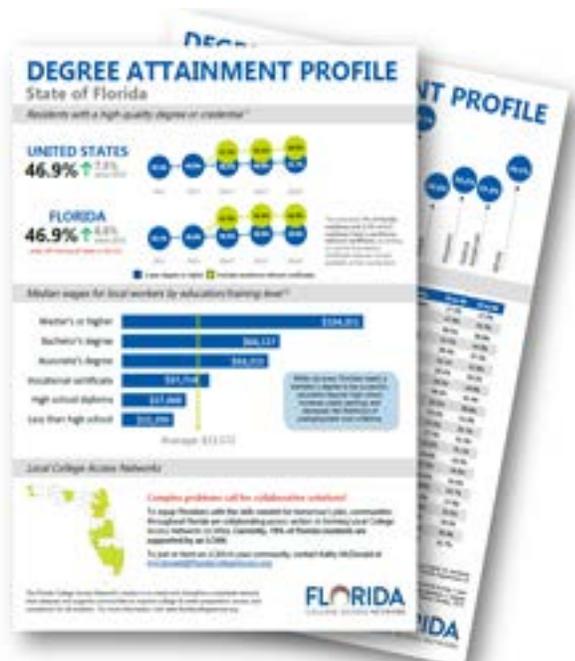
We must encourage students to choose a plan for life after high school that best meets their unique needs. That's why FCAN embraces a **broad definition of college** that embraces these various options.

When We Talk About College

- FCAN uses the word “college” to describe any high quality, credential-granting **education beyond high school**
- This definition of college includes **2-year degrees, 4-year degrees, and industry-recognized credentials**
- Apply Yourself Florida events should help students prepare for various **postsecondary plans**, including continuing education and military enlistment

Why College Matters

- Today's students need a postsecondary degree or credential to **earn a middle class income**
- The **fastest growing jobs** in Florida are those that require education beyond high school
- By the year 2025, **60% of jobs** will require education beyond high school; currently, **only about 47% of Floridians** hold such a credential



Learn About Your County's Degree Attainment

Download your county's degree attainment profile to learn more about your area's college-going rates

About Apply Yourself Florida

Apply Yourself Florida Is:

- Part of the **American College Application Campaign**, a national effort to increase the number of low-income and first generation students applying to college
- Held over one or more days in the month of **October** or **November**, depending on the school's needs
- Endorsed by the **Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA)**



Apply Yourself Florida Should:

- Be hosted **during school hours**, or during a regularly-scheduled after-school program, to make it easy for students to participate, and remove transportation as a barrier
- Be open to **all graduating seniors**
- Give students the opportunity to apply to the college, university, or technical school **of their choice**

Register Today!

- Schools, districts, local college access networks (LCANS), and community organizations can register as host sites for Apply Yourself Florida
- Registrants get access to free resources and promotional materials, as well as email support with helpful updates
- Registering helps FCAN track the progress of Apply Yourself Florida and grow the initiative, which makes more resources available for coming years!

What Do Sites Need to Host Apply Yourself Florida?

- 1** Time and space for the event
- 2** Computer access for students to work on applications
- 3** Volunteers to help students with applications
- 4** Snacks or incentives for students who complete applications (optional)

Why Register as a Host Site?

Registering only takes one minute! Register today at:

<http://floridacollegeaccess.org/initiatives/college-ready-florida-registration/>

Registration Benefits

Receive free resources, including “I Applied!” stickers

Get connected with community partners to help with your event

Receive updates with helpful tools and tips

Share your experiences so FCAN can celebrate your school!

Host Site Activities

- **Designate a host site coordinator** as the primary point of contact for the event
- **Secure computer access** for student use during the event
- **Promote the event** to build participation at the school
- **Recruit volunteers** to assist students
- **Collect and submit data** on the number of students served and the number of applications submitted

Optional Activities

- Organize a **planning committee** to support implementation of the event
- Seek support from your area’s **Local College Access Network (LCAN)** if you have one
- Make the **Apply Yourself Student Guide** available before the event to ensure students are prepared
- Follow up with students to ensure they have **completed their applications** and **submitted the FAFSA**
- Continue building a college-going culture by registering for the **Florida FAFSA Challenge** and **Florida College Decision Day**

What Resources are Available?

- ✓ **Apply Yourself Student Guide**
- ✓ **College Ready Florida Podcast**
- ✓ **College-Going Culture Toolkit (coming soon!)**
- ✓ **Apply Yourself Florida stickers**

Preparing Students

College Exploration and Application Help



Helping Students With College Exploration

It is important that students have the opportunity to apply to the school of their choice during your school's Apply Yourself Florida event. There are many resources available to help students determine which schools are a good fit for them.

Apply Yourself Student Guide

- [Available for download](#)
- **Prepares students** to complete applications
- Should be made available to students **3-4 weeks prior** to the event

Resources

Explore Fit and Match

Schools that are a good fit align with a student's values and preferences regarding student life, class size, location, etc. Schools that are a good match align well with a student's academic record.

The following resources help students explore these factors:

- [MyCareerShines](#)
- [FloridaShines](#) (Specific to Florida Schools)
- [ACT Profile](#)
- [Big Future](#)

Calculate the Cost of College

Many students avoid applying to college because they assume they cannot afford it. Other students take on burdensome loans, because they don't understand the cost of repayment.

These resources will help students understand the actual costs of college:

- [CollegeAbacus](#)
- [PellAbacus](#) (available in English and Spanish)

Text Advising

Text advising can be a helpful way for your students to get information about college. [GetSchooled](#) provides free text advising from real people on topics like college applications and financial aid.

Prepare for Completing Applications

Distribute the Student Instructions Handout on the day of the event to help students work on their applications. The student guide includes additional tools to help students with:

- Writing admissions essays
- Requesting letters of recommendation
- Obtaining fee waivers

Student Instructions Handout

Congratulations! You are taking the first step for going to college – applying!
There are several things you to do after today to complete the college application process. Check the "Next Steps" section in the Apply Yourself Guide!

Five Easy Steps!
Step 1: Go to the admissions page on the website of the college(s) to which you are applying. On this page, there should be a link to the online application.
Step 2: Complete the application(s) to the colleges and universities you have selected.
Step 3: Make note of any additional items you need to submit with your application (essay, transcripts, SAT or ACT scores, recommendation letters).
Step 4: Print out a copy of your confirmation page. Keep the confirmation page for your records!

Step 5: Get your "I Applied" sticker!

After You Apply
☑ Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many grants, loans, and scholarships require this application.
☑ To start your FAFSA, set up your FAFSA PIN. Go here to register for your FAFSA PIN: <http://www.pin.ed.gov>.
☑ You will need your Social Security Number (SSN), mailing address, and an email address to complete the process.
☑ REMEMBER YOUR FAFSA PIN! Write it down and keep it in a safe place!
☑ Make sure you submit any additional information, including recommendation letters, test scores, and high school transcripts.

Congratulations! You are on your way!

Student Instructions Handout



Supporting Undocumented Students

Florida is home to many undocumented students, or students with undocumented parents. These students may have unique needs when completing their college applications.

Students May be Eligible for an Out-of-State Tuition Fee Waiver If...

- They attended high school in Florida for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to graduation
- They apply to a postsecondary institution within 24 months of high school graduation
- They submit an official Florida transcript to verify attendance and graduation

Did You Know?

- Some undocumented students qualify for out-of-state tuition fee waivers that allow them to pay in-state tuition at Florida institutions
- Undocumented students do not qualify for state or federal financial aid, and should only complete a FAFSA if they are applying for a scholarship or institutional aid that requires it
- DACA recipients can use their workforce authorization number in place of a social security number, but still cannot receive federal or state financial aid

Best Practices for Working with Undocumented Students

- Make undocumented student resources available to all students. This will help students feel more comfortable asking for help. This also ensures that all students can get access to these resources without having to disclose their immigration status
- Once admitted to a school, eligible students will need to file an HB851 Out-of-State Fee waiver. Students may need help finding this waiver on the institution's website and submitting it to the correct office.
- Some documented students may have undocumented parents. In the past, the recommendation has been for parents without a social security number to use 000000000 instead. Always encourage parents to use their discretion in these cases.

Application Fee Waivers



of Florida students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, making Florida the **8th Highest** in the nation for percentage of eligible students.¹

Most of these students also qualify for **college application fee waivers**.

ACT College Application Fee Waivers

Eligibility: Students who used a fee waiver to take the ACT exam.

Access: School counselors should print the necessary number of fee waivers and sign off on student eligibility. Students must also sign the form.

[Download the fee waiver here](#)

SAT College Application Fee Waivers

Eligibility: Students who used a fee waiver to take the SAT exam or SAT subject test

Access: Students can access the fee waivers directly through their online College Board Account. Students may use up to four fee waivers. Counselor approval is not required.

[Find more information here](#)

National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) College Application Fee Waivers

Eligibility: Students are eligible for up to four fee waivers if they meet at least one of these criteria:

- The student used a fee waiver to take the SAT or ACT
- The student is enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program
- The student is enrolled in a program for low-income students (TRIO, Upward Bound)
- The student's family qualifies for public assistance
- The student is a ward of the state
- Other special circumstances outlined by the school counselor

Access: School counselors must print the form and sign off on student eligibility.

[Download the form here](#)

Make Sure Students Know...

- Their college application is not considered complete until the fee waiver is received
- If they are not using a fee waiver, they will need a credit card to pay the application fee

Fee Waivers by School

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
Florida A&M (FAMU)	ACT, SAT	Apply on-line using the application for FL Fee Waiver applicants. Attach the fee waiver prior to submission.
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	ACT, SAT	Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	ACT, SAT	Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. After answering questions on application, wait for fee waiver code to be sent from admissions office. Then, mail the fee waiver to the address below, or email to undergrad@fgcu.edu . Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
Florida International University (FIU)	ACT, SAT	Upon reaching payment page, select pay by check option. Then, mail the waiver to the address on the page, or email the waiver to admiss@fiu.edu .
Florida Polytechnic University	ACT, SAT	On the payment page, select the pay by fee waiver option. Mail the fee waiver to the admissions office, or email admissions@flpoly.org .
Florida State University (FSU)	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Submit part 1 of application. In part 2 of application, upload a copy of your signed fee waiver. The waiver may also be faxed to 850-644-0197, emailed to admissions@fsu.edu , or mailed to: FSU Admissions PO Box 3062400 Tallahassee, FL 32306
New College of Florida	NACAC, ACT, SAT, Common App	Submit fee waiver through the Common App website

Fee Waivers by School Cont.

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
University of Central Florida (UCF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT, Common App	Submit application without payment. Mail a written request and fee waiver to the address listed on application screen or submit via email to uaoperations@ucf.edu . Please include your name and date of birth. If a Social Security Number (SSN) appears on the waiver request, please black out all but the last four digits for security purposes. If using the Common App, submit the fee waiver through the Common App website.
University of Florida (UF)	ACT, SAT	On the payment screen, select the "mail payment" option. Mail the fee waiver to the address on the application screen.
University of North Florida (UNF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT	Submit your application without payment. Mail fee waivers to 1 UNF Drive, Jacksonville FL 32224.
University of South Florida (USF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT	Submit application without payment. Mail fee waiver to the address listed on application screen, email to admissions@usf.edu , or fax to 813-974-9689.
University of West Florida (UWF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT	Select mail in payment option. Then send waivers to UWF via email, or regular mail, or drop it off in person. Email: admissions@uwf.edu Mail to: UWF Undergraduate Admissions 11000 University Pkwy. Bldg. 18 Pensacola, FL 32514

Application Deadlines

School Name	General Deadline	Priority Deadline
Florida A&M (FAMU)	May 1	November 30 (priority scholarship consideration)
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	May 1	Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	May 1	Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. After answering questions on application, wait for fee waiver code to be sent from admissions office. Then, mail the fee waiver to the address below, or email to undergrad@fgcu.edu . Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
Florida International University (FIU)	Rolling Admissions	November 1 (merit scholarship deadline)
Florida Polytechnic University	Rolling Admissions after November deadline	November 1 (priority admission consideration)
Florida State University (FSU)	February 7	November 1 (priority admission consideration)
New College of Florida	April 15	November 1 (priority admission consideration)
University of Central Florida	May 1	
University of Florida	November 1	
University of North Florida	Rolling admissions	October 31 (priority admission consideration)
University of South Florida	March 1	November 1 (preferred admission consideration) January 1 (preferred financial aid deadline) January 15 (scholarship consideration deadline)
University of West Florida	June 1	December 1 (priority scholarship deadline) December 15 (priority financial aid deadline)

Event Planning

Resources and Strategies



Build Your Dream Team!

As the saying goes, “**many hands make light work.**” Many successful host site coordinators for Apply Yourself Florida work with a planning committee or **Dream Team** to plan and promote college readiness activities at their schools.

Why Have a Committee?

Planning committees can serve a variety of roles, including:

- Dividing labor in planning your school’s Apply Yourself Florida event
- Planning other events surrounding college application activities
- Planning college readiness activities throughout the year (FAFSA Completion, Decision Day, etc.)

Possible Planning Committee Members

- **School counselors**
- **Teachers**
- **Administrators**
- **Parents/PTA**
- **Student leaders**
- **Community members**
- **Local College Access Network (LCAN) members**

School Spotlight

Quandria Jenkins entered her lead graduation coach position at Lake Gibson during the 2016-17 school year. First, she attempted to organize college readiness activities on her own. But she quickly realized she needed help and cooperation from other faculty members.

Jenkins assembled a “Dream Team” of English and reading teachers who were committed to college preparation. By building these relationships, Jenkins gained trust and credibility to dedicate class time to items like FAFSA, Bright Futures, and college applications. “The teachers are excited to see me,” she explains, “because they know I’m going to share good information with their students.”

[You can read more about Jenkins’s approach here.](#)



Quandria Jenkins
Graduation Coach
Lake Gibson High School

Sample Event Timeline

Time to Event	Tasks to Complete
8-7 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a site coordinator and register with FCAN <input type="checkbox"/> Set up an Apply Yourself Florida committee at your school to aid planning <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm event dates with your school's administration and tech team <input type="checkbox"/> Reserve computer lab space for event and volunteer training
6 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize your event schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Create an event promotion plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to reach out to local businesses for in-kind donations <input type="checkbox"/> Decide how many volunteers you need (we recommend 3 per 20-25 students)
5 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine raffle prizes, and begin contacting local businesses if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Start recruiting volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Begin preparing students for application process
4 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Begin promoting the event in the school/community <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to reach out to business/volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Invite elected officials <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize how you will recognize donors before, during, and/or after the event
3 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements for students who need application fee waivers <input type="checkbox"/> Create a schedule for volunteers (be sure to account for breaks) <input type="checkbox"/> If hosting volunteer training, prepare presentation
2 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize volunteer list and complete required background checks <input type="checkbox"/> Share time/place of the event and confirm volunteer participation <input type="checkbox"/> Send out a press release, if you plan to work with local media <input type="checkbox"/> Send out parent information letter
1 Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all supplies are ready <input type="checkbox"/> Send reminders to volunteers, and host volunteer training/send webinar link <input type="checkbox"/> Remind school and community of event schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students and families to complete worksheets in student guide <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to bring a form of payment or fee waiver
Day of Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask volunteers to arrive early (15 minutes for a quick orientation, 45 minutes if hosting day-of training) and provide refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure computers and printers are working <input type="checkbox"/> Set up a sign-out station for data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Hang signs/decorations <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure each student receives an instruction sheet and starts working <input type="checkbox"/> Pair volunteers with students who need extra assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to print out confirmation pages for applications <input type="checkbox"/> Direct students who have completed applications to sign out/receive sticker <input type="checkbox"/> Hand out flyers for follow-up activities, like FAFSA completion <input type="checkbox"/> Take pictures to share with FCAN!
After Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with students who need to submit fee waivers <input type="checkbox"/> Send thank you letters to volunteers and businesses who supported the event <input type="checkbox"/> Send follow-up letters to participating students and families <input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to complete the FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> Submit participation data and feedback to FCAN using the site coordinator survey (the link will be emailed before the first week of December)

Ideas for Your Event

Successful Apply Yourself Florida events often create excitement about college applications by incorporating special activities or incentives. Many schools also like to dedicate a week to college readiness activities for students of all ages.

Activities for Your Event

- Provide computers and trained volunteers so students can work on college applications, FAFSA, or Bright Futures
- Provide assistance with writing essays for college applications or scholarships
- Invite local college admissions or financial aid reps, employers, and military recruiters to familiarize students with their options
- Consider providing snacks or pizza and/or playing music to create a fun environment for students

Offer Incentives!

These small incentives offer a motivation for students to focus and complete applications

- **I Applied! Stickers (FREE from FCAN)**
- **School-related raffles (yearbooks, prom tickets)**
- **Gift cards from a local business**

School Spotlight

Mindy Edgeman at Bloomingdale High School planned a week in the fall dedicated to college-related activities.

Seniors had the opportunity to work on college applications during class time. For extra motivation, students who filled out at least one application were entered in a raffle to win a gift card, a prom ticket, or a copy of the school's yearbook.

Representatives from several branches of the military, Hillsborough Community College's Ybor City campus Workforce Training Center, CareerSource Tampa Bay, and other organizations were also on hand to provide information.

[You can read more about Bloomingdale's event here.](#)



**Bloomingdale High School
2017 College Application
Week**

College-Going Culture Activities

Many schools coordinate other college-going culture activities during their Apply Yourself Florida events to engage younger students. This can be a great way to help students start thinking about college.

College Bingo

- Print out the college bingo card and distribute to students during your event
- Students complete the card by finding teachers/faculty to sign off on experiences they had during college
- Give a small prize to the student who completes their card first!

[Download the College Bingo Card](#)

“Ask Me About It!”

- Print out the “Ask Me About It!” posters and have teachers display them
- Encourage teachers to set aside 10-15 minutes at the beginning of class to share their college experience and answer questions

[Download the “Ask Me About It!” Poster](#)

Door Decorating

- Assign each homeroom a college or university to research, and give them time to decorate their doors for that college
- Give the winning school a prize (donuts, pizza party, homework pass, etc.)

Other Activities

- Designate a college gear/college t-shirt day during spirit week
- Host college trivia during announcements
- Bring in representatives from a local college/university to answer student questions or speak on a panel about their institution



Community Outreach

Reaching Out to Parents, Volunteers, and Businesses



Parent/Guardian Outreach

When helping students to take steps towards continuing their education, it is important to include parents/guardians. Including parents helps to build a college going culture at home.

Parents Can:

- **Help students explore** college options
- **Provide students with information** they may need for completing college applications and FAFSA, like Social Security Number or tax information
- **Volunteer** during Apply Yourself Florida events

Tips for Parent Outreach

- **Mail letters** to parents instead of relying on students to take them home
- **Send letters in English and Spanish** to all parents
- **Use text reminders or phone calls** through free services like Remind, or check with your school district for options for recording a robo-call
- **Follow up** after the event to congratulate their students and encourage them to take next steps

Here's a Tip!

Consider recruiting volunteers to contact parents via text message or phone call. Student assistants can also help with this task.

Carta de Información Para Estudiantes/Padres

Student/Parent Information Letter

Dear Students and Families,

This year, [NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL] is holding [EVENT NAME]. This event is part of a statewide effort to ensure all high school seniors prepare to continue their education.

What is [EVENT NAME]?

- On [EVENT DATE(S)], all seniors will be encouraged to apply to at least one college, university, or trade school.
- Trained volunteers will be available to help students with the application process.
- How should my student prepare for [EVENT NAME]?
- We encourage students to complete the College Application Worksheet prior to the event. You can find this worksheet at [DESCRIBE WHERE/HOW WORKSHEET IS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS].
- Completing this worksheet prior to the event will ensure that students can quickly and easily complete their applications.
- Students and their families will need to work together to gather the necessary information to complete this worksheet. Please take time to review the worksheet with your student.
- How else can I be involved in [EVENT NAME]?
- Let me know if any family members are interested in volunteering for the event!
- Volunteers can greet/sign in students, assist students completing college applications, or distribute information about financial aid.

If you have any questions, please call [SITE COORDINATOR'S NAME, SITE COORDINATOR'S TITLE], at [SITE COORDINATOR'S PHONE NUMBER]. Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative. Let's encourage all Florida students to make college a part of their future!

Sincerely,

[NAME OF SITE COORDINATOR] [TITLE]

Carta de Continuación Para Estudiantes/Padres

Student/Parent Follow-Up Letter

Dear Students and Families,

Recently, your student participated in [HIGH SCHOOL NAME]'s Apply Yourself Florida event. Congratulations on taking this important step toward continuing your student's education!

What's Next?

- **File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as soon as possible
- Filing the FAFSA ensures your student can benefit from federally funded financial assistance for continuing their education.
- Parents and students will need to create an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA. If you haven't set up an FSA ID, go to www.fsa.ed.gov to create one.
- Once you have created your FSA ID, you can complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- If you have questions about the FAFSA, please contact [School counselor/college advisor] at
- [contact information] for guidance.
- For additional assistance, [add information here about FAFSA events being held at the school or in the community].

Remember, schools should contact you!

Campuses should be in touch with your student via email or letter to inform them of the status of their application.

If the school does not contact your student within 2–3 weeks of their submission, get in touch with the college or university's admission office to inquire about their application status.

If you have questions, please call [NAME, TITLE], at [PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL]. Thank you for supporting your student's future and helping them navigate the path to college!

Sincerely,

[SCHOOL COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/SITE COORDINATOR]

Parent Information Letter (English/Spanish)

Parent Follow-Up Letter (English/Spanish)

Volunteer Recruitment

Apply Yourself Florida events would not be possible without the help of trained volunteers. Volunteers can help during any stage of event preparation to keep things running smoothly.

Where to Find Volunteers

- School alumni
- Student families/PTA (Parent Teacher Association)
- Community college or university admissions and financial aid representatives
- Student organizations from local colleges/universities
- Business, community, and local government leaders
- Members of a Local College Access Network (LCAN)
- Youth programs (YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way)

Here's a Tip!

We recommend 3 volunteers for every 20-25 students working on applications. Make sure you have volunteers to cover breaks too!

Many campus organizations require their members to participate in community service. This can be a good source of volunteers.

Strategies for Contacting Volunteers

- Send potential volunteer groups the volunteer recruitment letter
- Always mention the need for volunteers in promotional communications
- Reach out to student leaders in your school. For example, students who have already completed their applications could help other students during the event.
- Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Sites like Wufoo, Google Forms, and Survey Monkey can help you create online forms.



Make sure to find out whether your school requires background checks for volunteers

LCAN Spotlight

LCANs can be a valuable resource when planning Apply Yourself Florida events. LEAP Tampa Bay College Access Network prioritized partnerships with area high schools to support their College Ready Florida initiatives.

LEAP helps local high schools by recruiting and training volunteers for these events. LEAP works with local partners, including United Way, Seniors in Service, and Encore Tampa Bay to connect volunteers with schools.

[Read more about LEAP here.](#)



Volunteer Management

Training Volunteers

- Plan to hold volunteer training either the week before or the day(s) of your event
- Host training in person or via webinar (FCAN provides a [training PowerPoint](#))

Tasks for Volunteers

Before the Event

- Assist students with admissions essays
- Seek sponsors from the business community
- Support promotion and outreach efforts
- Post directional signs around the school and decorate for the event

During the Event

- Help students access the college/university website, begin an application, and navigate the application process
- Monitor printers to ensure printed applications remain in order and paper is stocked
- Distribute "I Applied" stickers
- Ensure students either complete a sign-out sheet or report number of applications submitted; tracking participation can help you measure your event's success and attract in-kind support in the future

Here's a Tip!

Clearly define volunteer tasks and responsibilities before the event so that all participants know what they should be doing.

Volunteer Thank You Letter/Email

Volunteer Information Letter/Email

Dear [NAME OF ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL],

This year, [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL] will participate in Apply Yourself Florida, also known as Florida College Application Week. This is part of a nationwide effort to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing postsecondary education. The event helps high school seniors navigate the complex college admissions process. It also ensures every graduating student applies to at least one postsecondary institution (2-year or 4-year college, certificate program, or vocational school).

Volunteers who support students are essential to the success of this event. We will be hosting our event on [DATE(S) AND TIME] and welcome representatives from [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] to assist our school.

Volunteers can greet and sign in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Our students appreciate your help and support as they take a big step toward going to college.

If you or any of your colleagues at [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] are interested in working with [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL], please contact me at [SITE COORDINATOR INFO].

Thank you!
[SITE COORDINATOR NAME] [YOUR TITLE]
[CONTACT INFO]

Volunteer Reference Guide

Thank you for volunteering for [HIGH SCHOOL NAME]'s Apply Yourself Florida event! On [DATE(S)], all graduating seniors will be encouraged to apply to college. The collaborative efforts of the administration, faculty, staff, students, their families, and volunteers like you make [EVENT NAME] possible. We appreciate your commitment to making college a reality for our students!

About Apply Yourself Florida

Apply Yourself Florida is an initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing postsecondary education. This initiative helps high school seniors navigate the complex college admissions process and ensures that every graduating student applies to at least one postsecondary institution (2-year or 4-year college, certificate program, or vocational school).

On [DATE(S)], [NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL] will set aside time during the school day for this event. During this time, graduating seniors will have the opportunity to complete at least one college application. Volunteers will be on hand to answer questions about the process.

Logistical Information for [High School Name]

Location

(Name of High School) is located at (address). (High School Event Name) will be held in the (location), which is located (description).

Event times/Shift times

(What time and date will the volunteer be working at your school?) Please plan to arrive (x) minutes prior to the start of your volunteer shift.

Parking

(Provide information here regarding where volunteers can park (usually visitor parking) and where it is located. What should volunteers do if that parking is full?) Upon entering the school, please go to (location) to check-in.

Attire

We ask that volunteers please come dressed in college attire. (Add other details as needed)

Breaks

Contact information for volunteer questions on day of event

For questions on the day of event, please call (contact) at (phone number).

Volunteer Information & Thank You Letters

Volunteer Reference Guide

Business Outreach Best Practices

Local businesses can be a great source of resources for your event. Many Apply Yourself Florida host site coordinators are able to plan their events at no cost thanks to in-kind donations received from businesses.

Finding Donation Sources

- Ask around your school community, planning committee, etc. to see if there are established connections to local businesses
- Identify businesses/individuals that have donated in the past. That said, be careful not to fatigue donors by asking them too often
- Remember that parents or faculty may be willing to donate

Thank Your Donors!

To encourage businesses to donate year after year, it is important to recognize and thank them.

Consider recognizing donors as event sponsors. After the event, send thank you letters and highlight the successes (number of students participating, applications submitted, etc.)

Tips for Approaching Business

- Call ahead to schedule a time to speak with the manager in person.
- Bring a Donation Request Letter to the meeting, as the business may need documentation to justify the donation or qualify for tax benefits
- Be specific about what you're seeking (gift cards, food, etc.), and describe how these donations will help the event
- Consider inviting the business's employees to volunteer

Business Outreach Letter

Business Outreach Phone Script

Hello. This is [NAME] from [HIGH SCHOOL]. I help support the Apply Yourself Florida event at our school, which aims to help high school students understand and complete college applications.

Do you have a moment to learn about this initiative and how I hope [BUSINESS NAME] can help more students in our community get to college?

Apply Yourself Florida is a statewide initiative that encourages graduating seniors to complete a college application. We're particularly focused on low-income students, first-generation college-going students, and students who would have not otherwise considered college.

Our goal is to help these graduating seniors navigate the college admissions process during the week of [EVENT DATES].

High schools participate in this initiative for free, and we hope to keep it that way. In my role as the [HIGH SCHOOL] site coordinator, I'm reaching out to local businesses to ask for your support. Would [BUSINESS NAME] want to support our school's Apply Yourself Florida event? (Based on response, make your recommendation of general support or a specific type of gift.)

Thank you for your [DONATION/TIME]. We very much appreciate your support for our students, and all you do for the local community.

Sponsor Thank You Letter

Dear [SPONSOR'S NAME/BUSINESS NAME],

On behalf of [HIGH SCHOOL NAME] I would like to personally thank you for your [donation/gift of X] to support our Apply Yourself Florida event. This event could not have been a success without your contribution and the help of many others who volunteered their time or resources.

During our event, [NUMBER OF SENIORS] completed [NUMBER OF APPS SUBMITTED]. Our seniors are one step closer to actualizing their dreams of attending college!

[Summarize events or include any press coverage]

Once again, [HIGH SCHOOL NAME] thanks you for your contribution towards a successful Apply Yourself Florida event! We truly appreciate your commitment to our students, and hope to work with you again.

[SITE COORDINATOR NAME AND TITLE]

Business Outreach Phone Script and Letter

Business Thank You Letter

Promoting Your Event

Reaching Out to Your School and Community



Promotion Strategies

Site Coordinators can use a variety of promotion strategies to make sure their students, parents, and community know about the event.

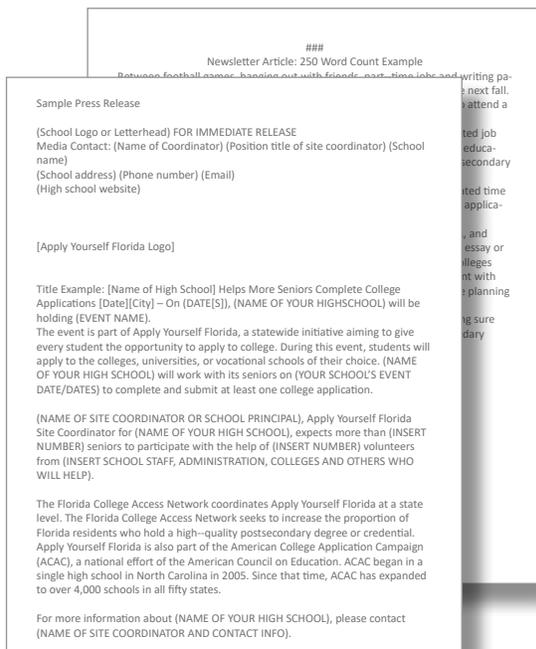
Traditional Media

- Consider contacting television stations, radio, newspapers, community newsletters, etc. to spread the word about your event
- Use the Sample Press Release to inform the media, and Sample Newsletter Article to publish in a school newsletter
- Reach out to other area schools to explore the option of issuing a joint press release

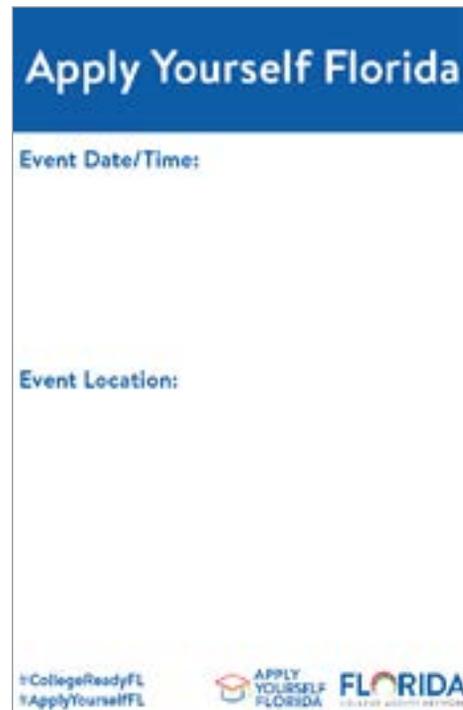


Fliers and Posters

Copies of posters and fliers can be easily downloaded from our website!



Sample Press Release & Newsletter Article



Printable Fliers & Posters

Social Media Quick Tips

Social media can be a great way to promote your event, create excitement, and answer questions that students, parents, and volunteers might have.

Use #Hashtags

- Using hashtags can make it easy for community members and statewide partners like FCAN to find updates and pictures from your event and amplify your good work!
- FCAN uses the hashtags **#IApplied**, **#ApplyYourselfFL**, and **#CollegeReadyFL**
- Consider using school-specific hashtags for your event
- Include hashtags on your posters, and encourage students to use them
- Tweet **@FLCollegeAccess** and **@ABolick_FCAN**

Tips for Different Social Networks

- **Facebook:** Create an event that volunteers can RSVP to; limit updates to 2-3 times a week
- **Twitter:** Post 1-3 times a day leading up to your event, and always use hashtags; tag volunteers or community members you hope to work with
- **Instagram:** Post pictures of students working on applications, receiving “I Applied!” stickers, participating in college readiness activities, etc.
- Be sure to follow your district’s privacy policy when sharing student photos!

LCAN Spotlight

The Talent4Tomorrow partnership in Sarasota took an innovative social media approach with Snapchat Geofilters, introduced by CareerEdge and piloted at Booker High School. A Geofilter is like a frame or sticker that can go on a Snapchat photo.

Talent4Tomorrow paid for these to display on Snapchat within the school cafeteria. When students took a Snapchat photo, they were able to select a filter related to the event. The students then shared the picture with their friends or on their 24-hour Snapchat “Story.”

The first day of the filter’s run, the information was viewed over 3,500 times as friends looked at the post or saw it in the user’s Snapchat “Story.” The filter was swiped by 367 students, 64 of them posted these framed photos on their account.



After Your Event

Following Up With Your Students



Next Steps for Students and Schools

Submitting a college application is the first step students must take in the complex college admissions process. Students often require additional support navigating next steps.

After Applying, Students Should:

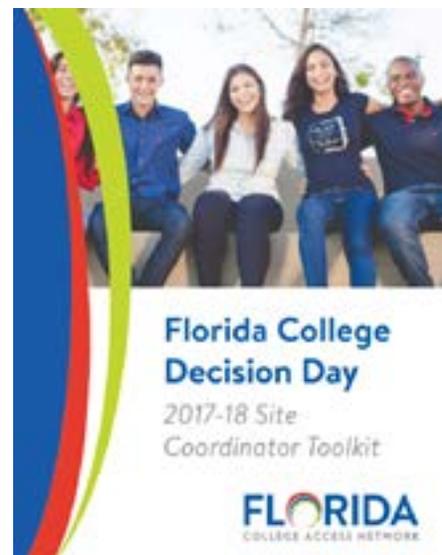
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to learn what financial aid they might qualify for
- Send in fee waivers (if applicable)
- If students mailed in fee waivers, encourage them to follow up with schools in 2-3 weeks to ensure their materials were received
- Make sure they included all necessary supplemental materials (letters of recommendation, admissions essay, etc.)

After the Event, Host Site Coordinators Should:

- Submit data to Florida College Access Network (see next page for more details)
- Follow up with students to provide help with completing applications and making final decisions about where to attend
- Follow up with parents to let them know the next steps in the admissions process
- Begin working with students on FAFSA completion (the application opens on October 1)
- Begin planning school participation in the Florida FAFSA Challenge and Florida College Decision Day (see toolkits to get started)



FAFSA Challenge Toolkit



College Decision Day Toolkit

Data Collection

Collecting data about the number of students participating in your event and the number of applications submitted helps you to measure the success of your program from year to year. This can help you raise in-kind support in the future.

Reporting your data also helps FCAN to track the growth of the campaign and provide the best resources.

Best Practices

- To protect student privacy, do not include student names in data submitted to FCAN
- Schools may choose to collect student-level data to follow up with students and track long-term effectiveness of their application week events

How to Collect Data

- Print out the [Senior Sign-Out Sheet](#) and have students complete it before leaving
- Set up a table where students will sign out and receive their "I Applied" sticker
- If you are not interested in collecting student level data, simply have a volunteer ask students how many applications they submitted before they receive their "I Applied!" sticker, and maintain a tally sheet

[Download the Student Sign-Out Sheet](#)

Reporting Your Data

- FCAN will email a link to the host site coordinator survey shortly after your event
- Best estimates are acceptable for reported numbers for students participating and applications submitted
- Site coordinators can also submit pictures highlighting the success of their event

Acknowledgments

This guide is 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.

Spanish translations were kindly provided by Dr. Sonia Ramírez Wohlmuth of the Department of World Languages at the University of South Florida and John Ceballos of Florida College Access Network.

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