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Dear Reader,

On behalf of Florida College Access Network (FCAN), thank you for participating in Apply Yourself Florida! 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), 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.

Apply Yourself Florida is one of four statewide initiatives that encourages and assists high school seniors as they take their next educational steps. FCAN also coordinates the Florida FAFSA Challenge, Florida College Decision Day and Plan It Florida. These initiatives support high school seniors with applying for financial aid, celebrating students for their postsecondary plans, and ensuring all high school seniors graduate with a college or career plan. We look forward to your school participating in Plan It Florida and, we hope, all four College Ready Florida initiatives!

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 Programs Coordinator, LaVerne Handfield, at lhandfield@floridacollegeaccess.org or at (813) 974-8712 with questions and suggestions.

FCAN thanks Helios Education Foundation for its generous support of Apply Yourself Florida
About Florida College Access Network

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida’s first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and prosper in Florida’s dynamic economy.

Our Mission: To create and sustain a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to increase college and career preparation, access, and completion for all students.

Our Vision: At least 60% of working-age Floridians will hold a high-quality postsecondary 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 Pre K-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.

LaVerne Handfield

Florida College Access Network
Programs Coordinator

lhandfield@floridacollegeaccess.org
(813) 974-8712
By the time today’s students enter the workforce, the majority of jobs in Florida will require a degree or credential beyond high school. The word “college” is used to describe any high-quality, credential-granting education or training beyond high school, including 2-year degrees, 4-year degrees, technical certificates and industry-recognized credentials.

Median wages for local workers by education/training level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education/Training Level</th>
<th>Median Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's or higher</td>
<td>$104,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>$68,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
<td>$63,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational certificate</td>
<td>$37,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>$27,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>$22,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$33,572</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The top 10 fastest growing jobs in Florida are those requiring education beyond high school, according to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Why College Matters

- Higher education levels lead to higher paying jobs and more lifetime earnings.
- Today’s students need a postsecondary degree or credential to earn a middle-class income.
- By the year 2025, 65% of jobs will require education beyond high school; currently, only about 49% 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

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About Apply Yourself Florida

Apply Yourself Florida is part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a national effort to increase the number of low-income and first-generation students applying to college. Host sites hold Apply Yourself Florida events over one or more days in October or November, depending on the school’s needs.

Apply Yourself Florida is endorsed by

The purpose of Apply Yourself Florida is to help students navigate the college application admissions process with the assistance of school staff and volunteers while removing barriers they may face such as transportation and access to technology.

Apply Yourself Florida events should:

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

Register Today!

- School 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)
Responsibilities of Participating High Schools/Organizations

- **Register as an official host site** at [http://floridacollegeaccess.org/initiatives/college-ready-florida-registration-2019-2020/](http://floridacollegeaccess.org/initiatives/college-ready-florida-registration-2019-2020/). 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.
- **Designate a host site coordinator** as the primary point of contact for the event.
- **Host an event during school hours**, or during a regularly-scheduled after-school programs. Some schools may host an event over multiple days, depending on the school’s needs. Secure a space with computer access for student use during the event (e.g. your school’s Media Center or library).
- **Promote the event** to students, parents and within the school to build participation.
- **Ensure students are prepared** to participate in the event (essays are completed prior to the event, students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.). See the College Research Worksheet and College Worksheet for handouts to provide to students.
- **Engage the local community**, students, families and other through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising the program.
- **Recruit volunteers**. Ask community leaders from the local area to help with the event. Some examples of volunteers include representatives from the admissions and financial aid offices at local colleges and universities; local library staff; local professional associations; Chambers of commerce; LCANs; parents/PTAs; Board of Education staff and school board members; and after-school programs.
- **Collect and submit data** to FCAN following the event on the number of students served and the number of applications submitted.

### What Resources are Available?
- Apply Yourself Student Guide
- College-Going Culture Toolkit
- Apply Yourself Florida stickers

### 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.

### Here’s a Tip!

School buy-in is important for a successful event! Engage teachers and other staff to help with pre-event activities and application events. Use student government representatives or other peer-to-peer mentors to spread the word amongst students.
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

- Prepares students to complete applications.
- Should be made available to students 3-4 weeks prior to the event.
- Available for download

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

Text Advising

Text advising can be 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
Application Fee Waivers

58% of Florida students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, making Florida the 8th Highest in the nation for percentage of eligible students.² 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 by the school.
- If they are not using a fee waiver, they will need a credit card to pay the application fee.

## Fee Waivers by School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Waivers Accepted</th>
<th>How to Use the Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida A&amp;M University (FAMU)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT</td>
<td>Apply online using the application for FL Fee Waiver applicants. Attach the fee waiver prior to submission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Atlantic University (FAU)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT</td>
<td>Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT</td>
<td>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 <a href="mailto:undergrad@fgcu.edu">undergrad@fgcu.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida International University (FIU)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT</td>
<td>Upon reaching payment page, select “pay by check” option. Then, mail the waiver to the address on the page, or email the waiver to <a href="mailto:admiss@fiu.edu">admiss@fiu.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Polytechnic University</td>
<td>ACT, SAT</td>
<td>On the payment page, select the “pay by fee” waiver option. Mail the fee waiver to the admissions officer, or email <a href="mailto:admissions@flpoly.org">admissions@flpoly.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida State University (FSU)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT, NACAC</td>
<td>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 <a href="mailto:admissions@fsu.edu">admissions@fsu.edu</a>, or mailed to: FSU Admissions PO Box 3062400 Tallahassee, FL 32306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New College of Florida</td>
<td>ACT, SAT, NACAC, Common App</td>
<td>Submit fee waiver through the Common App website.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Fee Waivers by School Contd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Waivers Accepted</th>
<th>How to Use the Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Florida (UCF)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT, NACAC, Common App</td>
<td>Submit application without payment. Mail a written request and fee waiver to the address listed on application screen or submit via email to <a href="mailto:uaooperation@ucf.edu">uaooperation@ucf.edu</a>. 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Florida (UF)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT</td>
<td>On the payment screen, select the “mail payment” option. Mail the fee waiver to the address on the application screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Florida (UNF)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT, NACAC</td>
<td>Submit your application without payment. Mail fee waivers to: 1 UNF Drive Jacksonville, FL 32224.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Florida (USF)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT, NACAC</td>
<td>Submit application without payment. Mail fee waiver to address listed on application screen, email to <a href="mailto:admissions@usf.edu">admissions@usf.edu</a>, or fax to 813-974-9689.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of West Florida (UWF)</td>
<td>ACT, SAT, NACAC</td>
<td>Select mail in payment option. Then send waivers to UWF via email, or regular mail, or drop it off in person. Email: <a href="mailto:admissions@uwf.edu">admissions@uwf.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mail to: UWF Undergraduate Admissions 11000 University Pkwy. Bldg. 18 Pensacola, FL 32514
# Application Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>General Deadline</th>
<th>Priority Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida A&amp;M University (FAMU)</td>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>November 1 (priority scholarship consideration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Atlantic University (FAU)</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>February 15&lt;br&gt;Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>November 1&lt;br&gt;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 <a href="mailto:undergrad@fgcu.edu">undergrad@fgcu.edu</a>. Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida International University (FIU)</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>November 15 (merit scholarship deadline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Polytechnic University</td>
<td>Rolling Admissions after November deadline</td>
<td>November 1 (priority admissions consideration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida State University (FSU)</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>November 1 (priority admissions consideration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New College of Florida</td>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Early decision (November 1)&lt;br&gt;March 1 (priority admissions consideration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Florida</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Florida</td>
<td>November 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Florida</td>
<td>Rolling admissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Florida</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>November 1 (preferred admission consideration)&lt;br&gt;January 1 (preferred financial aid deadline)&lt;br&gt;January 15 (scholarship consideration deadline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of West Florida</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>December 1 (priority scholarship deadline)&lt;br&gt;December 15 (priority financial aid deadline)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

**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 FASA 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.

**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

**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 HB951 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 000-00-0000 instead. Always encourage parents to use their discretion in these cases.
Pre-event Awareness & Activities

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

Spotlight

At Freedom High School, Jamie Wolford teamed up with an AVID teacher to provide seniors a chance to complete college applications, scholarships, and the FAFSA all month during October; they called this “KNOctober” as a way to get students to knock out those applications.

First period every day was designated for students to report to their AVID classroom to work on applications.

Jamie Wolford
College & Career Counselor
Freedom High School
## Event Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time to Event</th>
<th>Tasks to Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>7-8 Weeks</strong></td>
<td>□ Designate a site coordinator and register with FCAN&lt;br&gt; □ Set up an Apply Yourself Florida committee at your school to aid in planning&lt;br&gt; □ Confirm event dates with your school’s administration and tech team&lt;br&gt; □ Reserve computer lab space for event and volunteer training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Weeks</strong></td>
<td>□ Finalize your event schedule and create an event promotion plan&lt;br&gt; □ Plan to reach out to local businesses for in-kind donations&lt;br&gt; □ Decide how many volunteers you need (we recommend 3 per 20-25 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Weeks</strong></td>
<td>□ Determine raffle prizes, and begin contacting local businesses if necessary&lt;br&gt; □ Start recruiting volunteers&lt;br&gt; □ Begin preparing students for application process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Weeks</strong></td>
<td>□ Begin collecting supplies&lt;br&gt; □ Begin promoting the event in the school/community&lt;br&gt; □ Continue to reach out to businesses/volunteers&lt;br&gt; □ Invite elected officials&lt;br&gt; □ Finalize how you will recognize donors before, during, and/or after the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Weeks</strong></td>
<td>□ Make arrangements for students who need application fee waivers&lt;br&gt; □ Create a schedule for volunteers (be sure to account for breaks)&lt;br&gt; □ If hosting volunteer training, prepare presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Weeks</strong></td>
<td>□ Finalize volunteer list and complete required background checks&lt;br&gt; □ Share time/place of the event and confirm volunteer participation&lt;br&gt; □ Send out a press release if you plan to work with local media&lt;br&gt; □ Send out parent information letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Week</strong></td>
<td>□ Ensure all supplies are ready&lt;br&gt; □ Send reminders to volunteers, and host volunteer training/send webinar link&lt;br&gt; □ Remind school and community of event schedule&lt;br&gt; □ Remind students and families to complete worksheets in student guide&lt;br&gt; □ Remind students to bring a form of payment or fee waiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day of Event</strong></td>
<td>□ Ask volunteers to arrive early (15 minutes for a quick orientation, 45 minutes if hosting day-of training) and provide refreshments&lt;br&gt; □ Make sure computers and printers are working&lt;br&gt; □ Set up a sign-out station for data collection&lt;br&gt; □ Hang signs/decorations&lt;br&gt; □ Make sure each student receives an instruction sheet and starts working&lt;br&gt; □ Pair volunteers with students who need extra assistance&lt;br&gt; □ <strong>Remind students to print out confirmation pages for applications</strong>&lt;br&gt; □ Direct students who have completed applications to sign out/receive sticker&lt;br&gt; □ Hand out fliers for follow-up activities, like FAFSA completion&lt;br&gt; □ Take pictures to share with FCAN!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After Event</strong></td>
<td>□ Follow up with students who need to submit fee waivers&lt;br&gt; □ Send thank you letters to volunteers and businesses who supported the event&lt;br&gt; □ Send follow-up letters to participating students and families&lt;br&gt; □ Remind students to complete the FAFSA&lt;br&gt; □ Submit participation data and feedback to FCAN using the site coordination survey (the link will be emailed before the first week of December)</td>
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</table>
Budgeting

What Will My Event Cost?
Most host site coordinators host their events with a small budget. Some coordinators have hosted their event at no cost by having supplies donated.

Make sure to check with your supervisor before soliciting donations. Your school may have a policy in place.

For help reaching out to local businesses, FCAN provides letter templates: www.FloridaCollegeAccess.org/initiatives/apply-yourself-florida/

What Supplies Will I Need?
The supplies you will need for your event will depend on the type of event you are planning on hosting. These may include:

- Food
- Prizes/raffle
- Games/Entertainment
- Decorations

Sample Budget Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/Service</th>
<th>Purchased/Donated</th>
<th>Anticipated Cost</th>
<th>Actual Cost</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Total</td>
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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, 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, etc.)
- Gift cards from local businesses

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.
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 it 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!

**“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

**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 (candy, pizza party, homework pass, etc.)

**Other Activities**

- Designate a 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.

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 program (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 for 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.
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 websites, begin applications, 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.
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

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

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.)
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 join press release

**Fliers and Posters**

Copies of posters and fliers can be easily downloaded from our website!
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 to FCAN at @FLCollegeAccess

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.
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 FASA 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).
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 Form 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

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
Apply Yourself Florida Survey

Participation Data
Please report the number of seniors participating in your application event(s), as well as the total number of applications submitted at these events.

School name, county: ________________________________________________________________

Date of your College Application event: ______________________________________________

Approximately how many students participated in your event? ___________________________

Approximately how many applications were submitted? _________________________________

Did you collect information about what schools students applied to? Yes/No
(If yes, please list all schools that your students submitted applications to)

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Were students able to get assistance with their FAFSAs and/or create their FSA ID? Yes/No

Did you take pictures of your event? Yes/No

Are you able to share pictures with FCAN? Yes/No

Did you invite the media to cover your event? Yes/No Did they show up? Yes/No

Did you invite any elected officials to your event (e.g. school board member, mayor, city council member) to help them understand the challenges students face? Yes/No Did they show up? Yes/No If so, who came? __________________________

Did you find the Apply Yourself Florida Site Coordinator Guide helpful? Yes/No

Did you find the Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide helpful? Yes/No

Did you find the “I Applied!” stickers helpful? Yes/No

What other resources could FCAN provide to help support your future events?

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Acknowledgments

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