



**APPLY  
YOURSELF  
FLORIDA**

*2021 Site Coordinator  
Toolkit*

**ACAC**  
American College Application Campaign

**FLORIDA**  
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

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# Dear College Access Champion,

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 and community based organizations like yours across the state!

Apply Yourself Florida is one of four statewide initiatives that encourage and support 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 assist high school seniors with applying for financial aid, celebrating students plans for life after high school, and ensuring every Florida student graduates high school with a college or career plan. We look forward to your organization participating in Apply Yourself Florida and, we hope, all four College Ready Florida initiatives!

This guide offers 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 Adriana Pavicic, community engagement coordinator, at [apavicic@floridacollegeaccess.org](mailto:apavicic@floridacollegeaccess.org) or (813) 974-3897 with questions and suggestions.

***FCAN's work is possible thanks to the generous support of***



*Cornerstone Funder*

# About Florida College Access Network

**Florida College Access Network (FCAN)** is the heart of a movement to ensure today's students are prepared for tomorrow's jobs.

**Our Mission:** We lead the collaborative movement to ensure every Floridian achieves an education beyond high school and a rewarding career.

**Our Vision:** We envision a Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all.

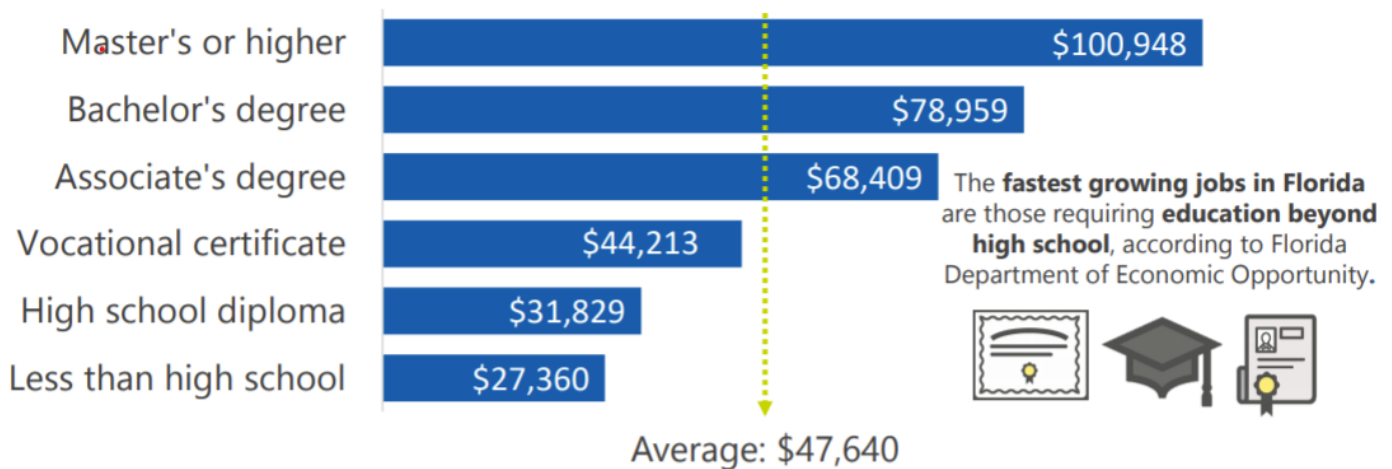
## **Our work is guided by our Seven Conditions for Success:**

1. **Opportunity for Everyone:** To build a talent-strong economy, all Floridians need access to a postsecondary education and the supports to complete it.
2. **Clear information and guidance:** Students of all ages and families need exposure and counseling early and often to make informed decisions about their futures.
3. **Affordable:** Postsecondary education needs to be within everyone's financial reach, regardless of household income or life circumstances.
4. **Multiple Pathways to Success:** Floridians benefit from multiple learning opportunities for academic achievement and career advancement.
5. **Lifelong learning:** No degree or credential is "one and done;" Floridians need to prepare for career changes through continuous learning.
6. **Effective use of data:** Transparent access to data on education and economic outcomes, especially for Florida's diverse populations, help achieve our goals.
7. **Community Collaboration:** When community partners work together toward a shared vision, they remove barriers, build a robust workforce, and improve the quality of life for their regions.

# The More You Learn, The More You Earn!

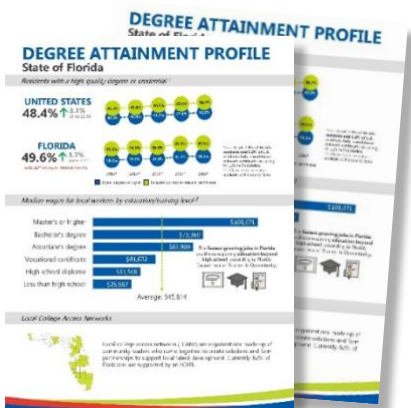
By the time today's students enter the workforce, 2 out of every 3 jobs in Florida will require a degree or credential beyond high school. The word "college" is used to describe any high-quality, credential-granting **education or training beyond high school**, including **2-year degrees, 4-year degrees, technical certificates** and **industry-recognized credentials**.

## Median wages for local workers by education/training level <sup>2</sup>



## Why College Matters

- **Higher education levels** lead to higher paying jobs and **more lifetime earnings** - **\$1 million** more on average for those with a bachelor's degree vs. a high school diploma.
- Today's students need a postsecondary degree or credential to **earn a middle-class income**.
- By the year 2025, **67% of jobs** will require education beyond high school; currently, **only 52.7% 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

<sup>2</sup> Average earnings: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, 2019.

# About Apply Yourself Florida

Apply Yourself Florida is part of the [American College Application Campaign \(ACAC\)](#), a national effort to increase the number of students applying to college from low-income households and/or are the first in their families to attend college. Host sites hold Apply Yourself Florida events over one or more days in September through 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 **at a time for students to conveniently participate**. The aim is to dedicate time during a regular school day/time to help students with application.
- Be open to **all graduating seniors**.
- Give students the opportunity to apply to the college, university, or technical college **of their choice**.

## Register Today!

- Schools, districts, PTAs, 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 just-in-time examples and tools.
- Registering helps FCAN track the progress of Apply Yourself Florida and grow the initiative, which makes more free resources available for coming years!

## What Resources are available?

- **Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide**
- **"I Applied!" stickers**
- **Plan It Florida Toolkit**
- **Plan It Florida one-pagers**



## Best Practices for Participating Host Sites

- **Designate a host site coordinator** as the primary point of contact for the event.
- **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 and parents via your virtual communications channels like text messages or robocalls, on social media and within the school to build participation.
- **Ensure students are prepared** to participate (students have researched the institutions they want to apply to, know what materials are needed to submit with applications, etc.). See the [Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide](#) for worksheets to provide to students.
- **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, parents/PTAs, LCANs, Board of Education staff and school board members, after-school programs, local professional associations, and Chambers of Commerce.
- **Collect and submit data** to FCAN following the event on the number of students that participated and the number of applications submitted using the survey on page 36 of this guide.
- 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 Florida Student Guide](#) available before the event to ensure students are prepared.
- Follow up with students to ensure they have **completed their applications and the FAFSA**.
- Continue building a college-going culture by [registering](#) for the [Florida FAFSA Challenge](#), [Florida College Decision Day](#) and [Plan It Florida](#).

### Here's a Tip!

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

## Track Your Results!

**Track your impact to share with school and district leadership (and FCAN!). This can help you raise donations, plan for volunteer support, track what's working, and inform what programs and activities that students need. Use the form on page 36.**

# How to Host a Virtual Apply Yourself Florida Event

With COVID-19 still affecting students' ability to receive in-person support during the college application process, FCAN is highlighting best practices for hosting virtual **Apply Yourself Florida** events.

The following is adapted from Handshake's [How to Host a Virtual Event](#).

Determine the type of event you want to host.	
<b>Q&amp;A Panel Discussion or "Office Hours"</b>	Connect students directly to admissions representatives. Reach out to area college and university admissions representatives to speak
<b>Application Completion Drive</b>	Take the traditional in-person college application completion event virtual. Select a platform to host your event where you are able to see students' faces and possibly share screens (in case they have a question they can't explain and would prefer to show you the issue).
<b>"On-site" admissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to area college admissions representatives.</li> <li>• Have state colleges review students' applications, provide feedback, and/or admit students on the spot.</li> <li>• Have students sign up for time slots to meet virtually with admissions representatives.</li> </ul>
<b>How-to Training</b>	Inform students of the steps to complete their college applications. Consider who can provide the most insight to your students such as admissions counselors or near peers – your recent high school graduates who now attend near-by institutions.

**Determine what platform to use to host your event.** Various platforms, such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom can allow many attendees in one place with the capabilities of screen sharing, video conferencing, and chat/instant messaging. [See more Zoom alternatives](#).

## Promote your virtual college application completion event to your students using multiple channels.

What communication channels are your school and district already using to reach students and families? What social media platforms are your students on? How can you reach students and families that are hard to get a hold of?

<b><u>Social media</u></b> Use visually appealing designs to capture your audience and targeted messages for each audience group. Parents tend to use Facebook and students tend to use Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat.	<b><u>Robocalls</u></b> If your district communications department has the ability, record a voicemail message with the details of your event to be sent out to parents on a designated day and/or time.
<b><u>Remind</u></b> Send quick and simple text messages and updates on a mass scale.	<b><u>Newsletter</u></b> Include information in the school's newsletter. (Tip: partner with your school's PTA to reach parents not connected to other school communication channels.)



# Preparing Students

*College Exploration and Application*



# 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.

## 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)
- [MyACT](#)
- [myOptions](#)
- [Big Future](#)

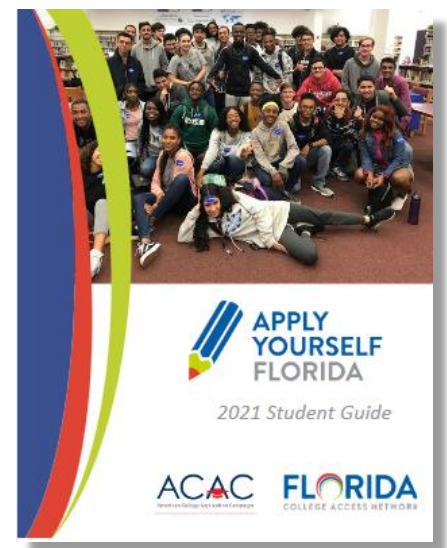
## Text Advising

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.

## Preparing Students to Complete Applications

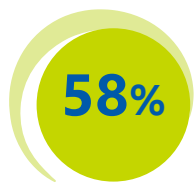
The [Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide](#) helps students with:

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



Click here to download the  
Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide

# Application Fee Waivers



of Florida students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, making Florida the **5<sup>th</sup> Highest** in the nation.<sup>1</sup> 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

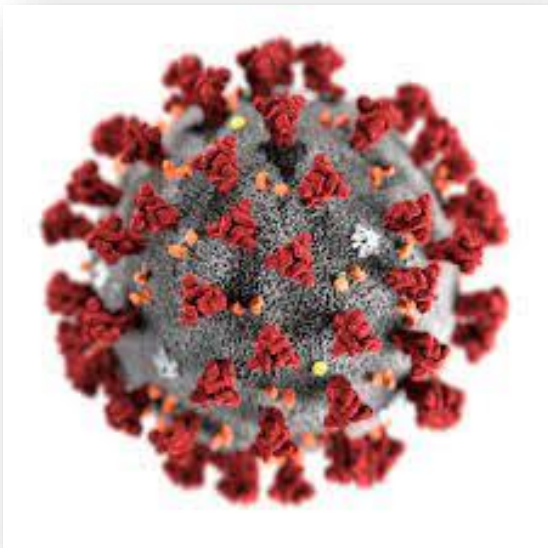
**Access:** School counselors must print the form and sign off on student eligibility. [Download the form here.](#)

### 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 or they can send a payment with cashier's check or money order.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: 2014-15. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_204.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_204.10.asp).





# ***Special COVID-19 Updates***

Due to the COVID-19 disruption, students or counselors can submit college application fee waivers directly to colleges and universities if obtaining both the student's and counselor's/school official's signatures is a hardship. Simply note that obtaining the second signature constitutes a hardship and send the form directly to the admission office.

[Read more about requesting NACAC admission application fee waivers.](#)

## **Student Changes in Financial Circumstances**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 58% of Floridians have lost their job, had a pay cut, or saw a reduction of hours. If a student's financial situation has changed recently, they should contact the financial aid office at their college or university as soon as possible to discuss their options. Each institution has its own method for documenting new financial situations and reassessing a student's financial need.

### **Swift Student**

[SwiftStudent](#) is a new, free digital tool for requesting changes to college financial aid packages. This tool carefully walks users through the process to appeal the financial aid they were initially offered, focusing on numerous special circumstances that may warrant a student requesting an adjustment to their financial aid, such as recent job loss of a parent, a medical crisis, loss of childcare or housing, etc. It also produces 14 customized templates for specific types of appeals. SwiftStudent is free to use, available to all current and prospective college students receiving federal student aid and does not share or sell personal data.

[Explore how students can use SwiftStudent to prepare their financial aid appeals.](#)

# Fee Waivers by School

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
<b>Florida Atlantic University (FAU)</b>	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Students should submit the application without payment, then submit their fee waiver with their FAU "Z" number included (from the application) either by email to <a href="mailto:admissions@fau.edu">admissions@fau.edu</a> , or fax to 561-297-2758.
<b>Florida A&amp;M University (FAMU)</b>	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Apply online using the application for FL Fee Waiver applicants. Attach the fee waiver prior to submission.
<b>Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)</b>	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. If you indicate that you qualify for a fee waiver, send the application fee waiver form to Undergraduate Admissions by email to <a href="mailto:admissions@fgcu.edu">admissions@fgcu.edu</a> , or mail to: Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
<b>Florida International University (FIU)</b>	ACT, SAT	Upon reaching payment page, select "pay by check" option. Upload your waiver to your student portal on MyFIU or send it directly to your admissions counselor (check FIU's website).
<b>Florida Polytechnic University</b>	ACT, SAT	On the payment page, select the "pay by fee" waiver option. Submit the ACT or SAT fee waiver to <a href="mailto:admissions@floridapoly.edu">admissions@floridapoly.edu</a> .
<b>Florida State University (FSU)</b>	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 <a href="mailto:admissions@fsu.edu">admissions@fsu.edu</a> , or mailed to: FSU Admissions PO Box 3062400 Tallahassee, FL 32306
<b>New College of Florida</b>	No application fee	---

# Fee Waivers by School Contd.

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
<b>University of Florida (UF)</b>	ACT, SAT	On the payment screen, select the "mail payment" option. Mail the fee waiver to the address on the application screen.
<b>University of Central Florida (UCF)</b>	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Submit application without payment. Submit a written request and fee waiver via email to <a href="mailto:myapplicationdocs@ucf.edu">myapplicationdocs@ucf.edu</a> , or mail to: Office of Undergraduate Admissions P.O. Box 16011 Orlando, FL 32816-0111 Please include your name and date of birth with any email requests. 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.
<b>University of North Florida (UNF)</b>	ACT, SAT	Submit your application without payment. The waiver can be faxed to 904-620-2414, emailed to <a href="mailto:admissions@unf.edu">admissions@unf.edu</a> , or mailed to: 1 UNF Drive Jacksonville, FL 32224.
<b>University of South Florida (USF)</b>	ACT, SAT, NACAC	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.
<b>University of West Florida (UWF)</b>	ACT, SAT, NACAC	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>  Mail to: UWF Undergraduate Admissions 11000 University Pkwy. Bldg. 18 Pensacola, FL 32514



# Application Deadlines

School Name	General Deadline	Priority Deadline
<b>Florida Atlantic University (FAU)</b>	April 1; rolling admission basis	February 15 (priority admission deadline) April 15 (early admission deadline)
<b>Florida A&amp;M University (FAMU)</b>	May 1	November 1 (university scholarship program consideration)
<b>Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)</b>	March 1	November 1
<b>Florida International University (FIU)</b>	April 1	December 1 (merit scholarship deadline)
<b>Florida Polytechnic University</b>	April 1; rolling admission basis	November 1 December 1 (priority financial aid deadline)
<b>Florida State University (FSU)</b>	March 1; rolling admission basis	November 1
<b>New College of Florida</b>	April 1	November 1 (early decision deadline)
<b>University of Florida (UF)</b>	March 1	November 1
<b>University of Central Florida (UCF)</b>	May 1	---
<b>University of North Florida (UNF)</b>	July 1; rolling admission basis	---
<b>University of South Florida (USF)</b>	April 1; rolling admission basis	December 1 (priority admission consideration) January 1 (priority financial aid deadline) January 15 (scholarship consideration deadline)
<b>University of West Florida</b>	June 1; rolling admission basis	December 1 (priority admission/scholarship deadline) February 15 (priority financial aid deadline)

# 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 college-based aid that requires it.
- DACA students with a social security number can complete the FAFSA. They are not eligible for federal aid but will receive a Student Aid Report that demonstrates financial need and can be used to apply for college-based and other scholarships.

## 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. For parents without a social security number, they should use 000-00-0000 instead. Always encourage parents to use their discretion in these cases.

# Event Planning

## *Resources & Strategies*



# 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 organizations / members
- Local College Access Network (LCAN) members

## Spotlight

Polk County understands that it takes partnership throughout the K-12 system to build a strong college-going culture. George Jenkins High School, Polk County Public Schools, and Polk Vision (Local College Access Network) collaborated to implement FCAN’s College Ready Florida initiatives and have seen a greater impact on students’ dreams to attend college.



**Darius Jones**  
**Professional School Counselor**  
**George Jenkins High School**

# Event Timeline

Time to Event	Tasks to Complete
7-8 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Designate a site coordinator and <a href="#">register with FCAN</a></li> <li>□ Form a committee to aid in event planning</li> <li>□ Confirm event dates with your school's administration and tech team</li> <li>□ Reserve computer lab space for event and volunteer training</li> </ul>
6 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Finalize your event schedule and create an event promotion plan</li> <li>□ Reach out to local businesses for in-kind donations</li> <li>□ Decide how many volunteers you need (we recommend 3 per 20-25 students)</li> </ul>
5 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Determine raffle prizes and begin contacting local businesses if necessary</li> <li>□ Start recruiting volunteers</li> <li>□ Begin preparing students for the application process (share the <a href="#">Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide</a>)</li> </ul>
4 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Make a list of all the supplies you will need for the event and begin collecting supplies</li> <li>□ Begin promoting the event in the school and/or community</li> <li>□ Continue to reach out to businesses/volunteers</li> <li>□ Invite elected officials</li> <li>□ Finalize how you will recognize donors before, during, and/or after the event</li> </ul>
3 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Make arrangements for students who need application fee waivers</li> <li>□ Create a schedule for volunteers (be sure to account for breaks)</li> <li>□ If hosting volunteer training, prepare <a href="#">presentation</a></li> </ul>
2 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Finalize volunteer list and complete required background checks</li> <li>□ Share time/place of the event and confirm volunteer participation</li> <li>□ Send out a <a href="#">press release</a> if you plan to work with local media</li> <li>□ Send out <a href="#">parent information letter</a></li> </ul>
1 Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Ensure all supplies are ready</li> <li>□ Send reminders to volunteers, and host volunteer training/send webinar link</li> <li>□ Remind school and community of event schedule</li> <li>□ Remind students and families to complete worksheets in <a href="#">Apply Yourself Florida Student Guide</a></li> <li>□ Remind students to bring a form of payment for their applications</li> </ul>
Day of Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Ask volunteers to arrive early (15 minutes for a quick orientation, 45 minutes if hosting day-of training) and provide refreshments</li> <li>□ Make sure computers and printers are working</li> <li>□ Set up a sign-in/sign-out station to <a href="#">track participating students and collect data</a></li> <li>□ Hang signs/decorations</li> <li>□ Make sure each student receives an <a href="#">instruction sheet</a></li> <li>□ Pair volunteers with students who need extra assistance</li> <li>□ <b>Remind students to print confirmation pages after submitting applications</b></li> <li>□ Direct students who have completed applications to sign out/receive sticker</li> <li>□ Hand out flyers for follow-up activities, like FAFSA completion events</li> <li>□ Take pictures to share with FCAN, your donors, parents and on social media!</li> </ul>
After Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Follow up with students who need to submit application fee waivers</li> <li>□ Thank <a href="#">volunteers</a> and <a href="#">businesses</a> who supported the event with letters and pictures</li> <li>□ Send <a href="#">follow-up letters</a> to participating students and families about next steps in the college-going process</li> <li>□ Remind students to complete the FAFSA</li> <li>□ Submit participation data and feedback (see form on page 36) to <b>Adriana Pavicic at FCAN</b> at <a href="mailto:APavicic@FloridaCollegeAccess.org">APavicic@FloridaCollegeAccess.org</a> or using the Apply Yourself Florida survey link that will be shared via a link in the counselor e-blasts in late fall.</li> </ul>

# Budgeting

## What Will My Event Cost?

Most 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/](http://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 plan to host. These may include:

- Food
- Prizes/raffle
- Games/entertainment
- Decorations



## Sample Budget Table

Item/Service	Purchased/Donated	Anticipated Cost	Actual Cost
Total			



# 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 [FFAA](#).
- Help with writing essays for college applications or scholarships.
- Invite local college and career technical school 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 when you register with FCAN)**
- **School-related raffles (yearbooks, prom tickets, etc.)**
- **Gift cards from local businesses**

## Spotlight

Jennifer Batchelor at Wiregrass Ranch High School planned a College Spirit Week in the fall (see next page) to encourage high school seniors to apply and/or explore options to at least one pathway for education beyond high school.

Daily events included completing college applications, attending FloridaShines Virtual College Week webinars (when available), meeting with representatives from area colleges and universities, engaging with alumni to learn about their experiences and pathways after graduating, and engaging in activities to learn about school staff's college experiences and ensuring they had their "ducks in a row" to graduate.



**Wiregrass Ranch High School  
2019 College Spirit Week**

EXAMPLE

# College Spirit Week

Wiregrass Ranch High School

OCT 28 - NOV 1  
2019

## WHAT IS COLLEGE SPIRIT WEEK?

College Spirit Week is part of Apply Florida and the American College Application Campaign (ACAC). This is an initiative that assists college-bound seniors with completing their admissions applications & focuses on increasing the number of first generation & low-income students pursuing a college degree or other post-secondary education. This initiative helps students recognize their opportunities and the path to make it happen!

## GENERAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### Application Central

Laptop computers will be available in 3-104 & 3-108A for Seniors to:

- ▶ Start and/or complete admissions applications
- ▶ Explore admission pages of specific colleges or universities
- ▶ Apply to vocational or technical programs

### Virtual College Webinars

Through the Florida Shines website, we will provide recordings or webinars covering a variety of topics.

- ▶ Admissions
- ▶ Survival Tips for Parents
- ▶ Transition to life after high school
- ▶ Financial Aid

[virtualcollegeweek.org](http://virtualcollegeweek.org)



We are striving to have as many Seniors apply and/or explore options to at least one post-secondary institution.

- 2 year college
- 4 year university
- Certificate Program
- Vocational School





## MONDAY 10/28

**Application Central** - Laptops available in 3-104 & 3-108A for college application assistance periods 1-7, before/after school

**College Bingo!** - Seniors can get a BINGO card from their 1st period teacher or Student Services. Complete the ENTIRE card by locating the teachers/staff who had that college experience listed in the different squares. Staff is asked to sign in the square that pertains to them. Students - please submit COMPLETED cards to Student Services for prize drawings!!!

**Marchman Tech College Presentation** - Reps from MTEC will present to Seniors interested in learning about the programs offered, as well as, other career options. (Interested in the presentation? Sign up on the C/O 2020 Canvas page)

## TUESDAY 10/29

**Application Central** - Laptops available in 3-104 & 3-108A for college application assistance periods 1-7, before/after school

**PHSC Concept College** - Information for specific Seniors/INVITATION ONLY!

**Are Your Ducks in a Row?** - This activity takes place during lunches & will see if your 'ducks are in a row to graduate!' Test your knowledge about college & career terms, degrees, college life, high school & financial aid!!!

## WEDNESDAY 10/30

**Application Central** - Laptops available in 3-104 & 3-108A for college application assistance periods 1-7, before/after school

**INTERESTED IN COSMETOLOGY?** - Pasco Schools/Adult Education Cosmetology program. Interested students will sign up to attend this informative program. Learn about how to access this program!

(Sign up for presentations via link on 2020 Canvas page )

## THURSDAY 10/31

**Application Central** continues!! 3-108A & 3-104

**PHSC Porter Campus** - Sign up to learn about college admissions & available programs at PHSC - 3rd period. Sign up on the 2020 Canvas page!

## FRIDAY 11/1

**Application Central** continues! 3-108A & 3-104

**COLLEGE SPIRIT DAY!!!** Students, faculty & staff are encouraged to wear college/university spirit attire!

**WRHS Alumni Panel** - Alumni from several different classes will be here to share their experience and pathways after graduating...from the workforce to college!

- APPLICATION CENTRAL
- MTEC
- PHSC
- WEBINARS
- COLLEGE BINGO
- DUCKS IN A ROW!
- ALUMNI PANEL
- COLLEGE SPIRIT DAY!!!



**FINANCIAL AID NIGHT**  
**WEDNESDAY, 10/30 6:00PM**  
**WRHS CAFETERIA**

# College-Going Culture Activities

Many schools coordinate other activities to create a college-going culture during their Apply Yourself Florida events to engage lower grades. This can be a great way to help students start thinking about college. Here are some ideas. You can find more in the [Plan It Florida toolkit](#).

## 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!

**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 best decorated homeroom door a prize (candy, pizza party, homework pass, etc.)

## Other Activities

- Designate a college t-shirt day during spirit week
- Host college trivia during announcements
- Host a panel discussion with representatives from a local college/university to answer student questions



# Community Outreach

*Reaching Out to Parents, Volunteers, and Businesses*





# Parent/Guardian Outreach

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

## Parents/Guardians can:

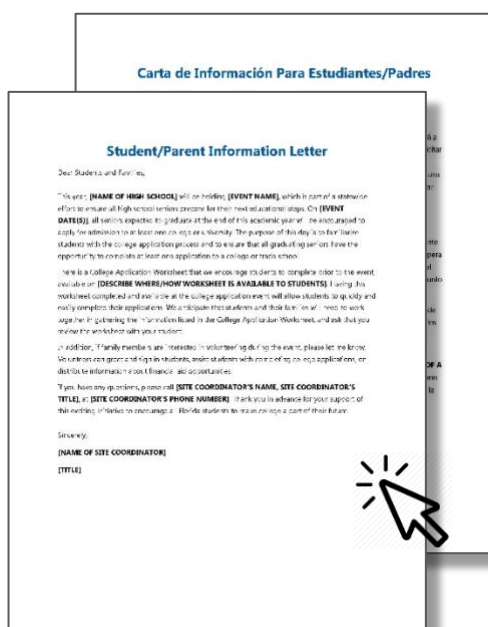
- Help students explore options for education beyond high school.
- Provide students with information they may need for completing college applications and the FAFSA, like Social Security Number(s) or tax information.
- Volunteer during Apply Yourself Florida events.

## Tips for Parent/Guardian Outreach:

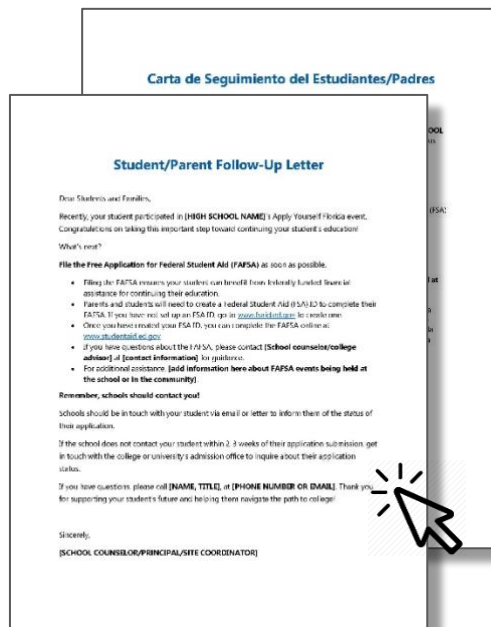
- Mail letters to parents instead of relying on students to take them home.
- Send letters in English and Spanish to all parents.
- Use text reminders or phone calls through free services like Remind or check with your school district for options for recording robocalls.
- Follow up after the event to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

### Here's a Tip!

Consider recruiting volunteers to contact parents/guardians 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)



# Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers can help during any stage of event preparation to keep things running smoothly.

## Where to Find Volunteers:

- School alumni, especially near peers
- Student families/Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)
- Area college or university admissions and financial aid representatives
- Student organizations from local colleges/universities
- Business, community, and local government leaders
- Members of your 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 for volunteers.**

## Strategies for Contacting Volunteers

- Send potential volunteer groups the [volunteer recruitment letter or email](#).
- 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.
- Reach out to near peers – alumni from your high school that have recently graduated and are attending a nearby college, university or career/technical school.
- Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Sites like Google Forms and Survey Monkey can help you create online forms.
- Seek bi-lingual volunteers in the languages spoken most by your school's families.



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

# Managing Volunteers

## Training Volunteers

- Plan to hold volunteer training either the week before or the day(s) of your event.
- Host training in-person or virtually (FCAN provides an editable [training PowerPoint](#)).

## Tasks for Volunteers

### Before the Event

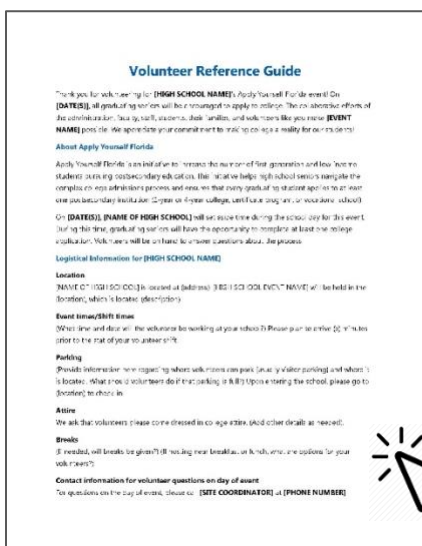
- Assist students with admissions essays
- Seek sponsors from the business community
- Support promotion and outreach efforts
- Post directional signs around the school and decorate for the event

### During the Event

- Help students access the college/university websites, begin applications, and answer any questions students may have, regardless of where they wish to apply.
- Monitor printers to ensure printed applications remain in order and paper is stocked.
- Ensure students sign in when they arrive and sign out reporting the number of applications they submitted; tracking participation can help you measure your event's success and attract in-kind support in the future.
- Hand out "I Applied!" stickers to participating students after they sign out.

### Here's a Tip!

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



### Volunteer Reference Guide



### Volunteer Information & Thank You Letters

# Business Outreach Best Practices

Local businesses can be great resources for your event. Many Apply Yourself Florida 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.

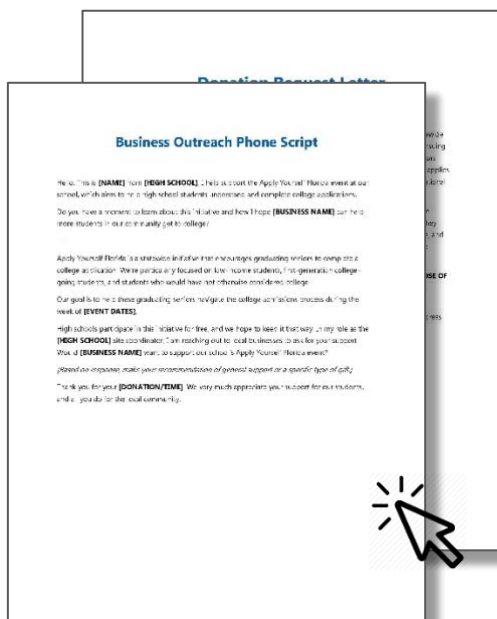
## Tips for Approaching Businesses

- 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. If you've tracked your events in the past, it's helpful to share the number of students you anticipate participating.
- 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.).



**Business Outreach Phone  
Script & 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

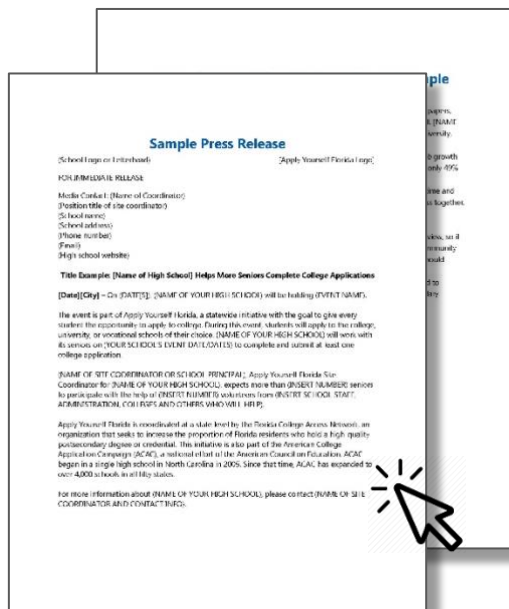
- Consider contacting television stations, radio, newspapers, community newsletters, etc. to spread the word about your event.
- Use the Sample Press Release to inform the media, and Sample Newsletter Article to publish in a school newsletter.
- Reach out to other area schools to explore the option of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



**Check with school administration to ensure your media outreach complies with the district media policy**

## Flyers and Posters

Copies of posters and flyers can be easily downloaded from the [Apply Yourself Florida webpage!](#)



**Sample Press Release & Newsletter Article**



**Printable Flyers & 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 recommends using the hashtags **#IApplied**, **#ApplyYourselfFL**, and **#CollegeReadyFL**.
- Include hashtags on your posters and encourage students to use them.
- Engage with FCAN on Twitter and Instagram at **@FLCollegeAccess** and Facebook at **Florida College Access Network**.

## 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. Tag local reporters to encourage them to cover your event. Tag and publicly thank local businesses for supporting your event.
- **Instagram:** Post pictures of students working on applications, showing off their "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 Sarasota LCAN took an innovative social media approach with Snapchat Geofilters. A Geofilter is like a frame or sticker that can go on a Snapchat photo.

They 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, and 64 of them posted these framed photos on their account.





# After Your Event

*Following Up with Your Students & FCAN*



# 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 their next steps.

## After applying, students should:

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) starting October 1<sup>st</sup> to learn what financial aid they might qualify for.
- Send in application fee waivers (if eligible).
- 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, site coordinators should:

- **Submit tracking data to FCAN** (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<sup>st</sup>).
- Begin planning school participation in the Florida FAFSA Challenge and Florida College Decision Day (see toolkits to get started).



[Access resources for the Florida FAFSA Challenge](#)



[Access resources for Florida College Decision Day](#)

# 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 and built support from administrative leaders.

**Reporting your data helps FCAN to track the growth of the campaign across the state and to attract funders to provide the most helpful free 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.

**Download the  
Senior Sign-out Form**



## Reporting Your Data

- You can email your tracking sheet to Adriana Pavicic with FCAN at [APavicic@FloridaCollegeAccess.org](mailto:APavicic@FloridaCollegeAccess.org) after your event or you can follow the link to the site coordinator survey sent via the weekly coordinator e-blasts shortly after your event.
- Best estimates are acceptable for reported numbers of students participating and applications submitted.
- Site coordinators are encouraged to also submit pictures highlighting the success of their event(s).

# 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(s) of your College Application event: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many students participated in your event? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many applications were submitted? \_\_\_\_\_

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

If yes, are you able to share pictures with FCAN? Yes/No

Did you invite the media to cover your event? Yes/No If yes, 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 around applying to college? Yes/No If yes, 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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Please share a testimonial on how your Apply Yourself Florida event has helped your students.

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Share your results with FCAN through the survey link you'll get in an email in late fall, or email this completed form to: [apavicic@floridacollegeaccess.org](mailto:apavicic@floridacollegeaccess.org).



# Acknowledgments

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