



SITE COORDINATOR MANUAL

Part 3: Post-Event

2017 Edition

Funding and support for this guide was provided by
ACT

American Council on Education
Bank of America Charitable Foundation

College Board

Hearst Foundation

Lumina Foundation

KPMG Foundation

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The Education Trust

The Kresge Foundation

Strada Education Network (formerly USA Funds)

Copyright © 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 American Council on Education. This publication may be reprinted without permission, provided that all notices remain intact. Revisions may be made to portions of the publication only to replace any state-specific references with the name of another state for use in a College Application Campaign event. Any commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Table of Contents

Preparing and Implementing a College Application Event.....	3
After Your College Application Event – Resource Overview.....	4
Volunteer Thank You Letter	5
Post-Event Press Release	6
Understanding Financial Aid Award Letters	7
FAFSA Awareness Campaign.....	8
College Signing Day	9

All items found in the Site Coordinator Manual are available on the American College Application Campaign website for you to download and print. Visit www.acenet.edu/acac and select “Resources.”

Preparing and Implementing a College Application Event

There are a variety of activities that high school site coordinators can do prior to, during, and after the school's College Application event to ensure it is successful and meaningful for participating students. These activities are outlined in three Site Coordinator Manuals and samples are included in corresponding sections of each manual. Each manual has been updated by your state's designated State Coordinator to reflect the implementation of the College Application Campaign in your state. Additionally, there is a **site coordinator checklist** to assist you with tracking the implementation of each activity. All materials are available on ACAC's website, www.acenet.edu/acac, under Resources.

Site Coordinator Manual Part 1: Pre-Event Planning: Creating a College-Going Culture and Getting Students Prepared

There are several activities that schools participating in the College Application Campaign program can do prior to the event in order to prepare students and to generate enthusiasm and support for the program. Part 1: Pre-Event Planning Site Coordinator Manual focuses on pre-event activities that high school site coordinators can utilize as they plan for the program.

- Brand Standards
- Planning Committee Audit and Agenda
- College Research Worksheet
- College Application Worksheet
- Application Fee Waivers
- "Ask Me!" About It Signs
- Information Letters
- Phone Blasts
- Sample Newsletter Article
- Mayoral Proclamation
- Social Media Engagement
- Website Content Recommendations
- Sample Press Releases and Media Advisory
- Volunteer Outreach Resources
- Other Pre-Event Activities

Site Coordinator Manual Part 2: During your College Application Event

You have completed all of the planning for your College Application Campaign program and due to the pre-event activities, your students are prepared and the community is engaged in this exciting initiative. Use these activities and resources to help make your event a success!

- Ask Me! Button, Badges, Stickers
- Student Instructions for Day of Event
- College Application Sign-Out Sheet/Student Sign Out Form
- Reminders and Recognition
- Next Steps Handout
- Reminders for FAFSA Completion Event
- Social Media Engagement

Site Coordinator Manual Part 3: After your College Application Event

Congratulations! You have successfully implemented a College Application Campaign program for your students and started them on the pathway to enrolling in college next fall. The following templates and suggestions are provided to assist you with post-event activities.

- Volunteer Thank You Letters
- Post-Event Press Releases
- Understanding Financial Aid Award Letters
- FAFSA Completion Campaign
- College Signing Day

After Your College Application Event – Resource Overview

It is important to ensure that students complete their college applications by submitting other required materials institutions may require such as high school transcripts, college entrance exam scores, recommendation letters, etc. In addition, students should be encouraged to submit additional applications after the event if they did not have time to complete as many as they wanted to during the event.

Post-event activities are included below. Samples of the following materials are included in this manual. Common uses for each are detailed below. Many of the provided resources included were adapted from ACAC state campaign participants. ACAC appreciates the willingness of the states to share with the campaign network. The materials have been updated by your College Application State Coordinator to reflect your state's implementation.

Volunteer Thank you Letters

It is important to recognize the time, energy, and effort that volunteers contributed to your school's College Application event. A template thank you letter has been provided. Feel free to print this on school letterhead and mail. Or, if you would like to send by email, that is a great way to show your appreciation as well.

Post-Event Press Release

You notified your community that the event was coming up – now make sure you communicate about the success of your program! Use this template to update your local media about the impact of your program.

Form Your Future

The National College Access Network's (NCAN) "Form Your Future" campaign urges young people – particularly low-income, minority students who would be the first in their family to attend college – to claim what is theirs and achieve their educational dreams by filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Understanding Financial Aid Award Letters

Provide this handout to students and/or host information sessions as financial aid award letters begin to arrive. These guidelines to understanding financial aid award letters are pulled directly from the Federal Student Aid office at the U.S. Department of Education (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/>).

College Signing Day

Former First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher team encourages all high schools to host a College Signing Day. Intended to recognize the important academic achievements of students and their decision regarding where they will enroll in college, College Signing Days celebrate this important milestone. Use these suggestions and watch a video of one high school's approach to help plan and host your own College Signing Day!

Other Follow-Up

As noted on the timeline and checklist provided by your ACAC state coordinator, it is important that your school team meet after the College Application program to discuss what worked and identify areas for improvement. This time can also be used to share the results of your program. Use the student sign-out sheet to understand the number of students who applied to college and the number of applications that were submitted. During this debrief meeting, the school team should identify a plan to follow-up with participating students to ensure they complete the application process (by submitting transcripts, test scores, etc.) and that they submit a completed FAFSA.

Volunteer Thank You Letter Template

Dear [VOLUNTEER'S NAME],

On behalf of [NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL], I would like to personally thank you for volunteering your time at our [STATE CAMPAIGN NAME] event. This campaign could not have been a success without your help and the help of many others who volunteered their time.

[State Coordinators, include this if you plan to have a volunteer survey: To improve our future [STATE CAMPAIGN NAME] events and your volunteer experience, please complete this short online survey at your convenience: [survey link]]

During [NAME OF STATE CAMPAIGN], [NUMBER OF SENIORS SUBMITTING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS] seniors submitted over [NUMBER OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED] college applications. [Optional→]In addition, [FAFSA COMPLETION PERCENTAGE] of our students filed their FAFSA during the [DATE]. Thanks to our seniors' hard work and the assistance of volunteers like you, they are one step closer to actualizing their dreams of attending college!

Once again, [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL] thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time during [NAME OF STATE CAMPAIGN]! We look forward to seeing you throughout the school year and especially at our event next year.

Sincerely,

[SITE COORDINATOR NAME]
[YOUR TITLE]
[CONTACT INFO]

Post-Event Press Release

Use the following press release to distribute a few weeks or months after your campaign efforts once data has been compiled. If data will not be available for more than two months, consider modifying the press release to include estimated numbers.

[High School logo] [State's ACAC logo or Letterhead] [National ACAC logo]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Name of Site Coordinator]

[Agency Name and Address]

[Site Coordinator Phone number]

[Site Coordinator Email]

[State ACAC website or high school website]

[Estimated number] of [High School]'s seniors apply to college during [Name of State's ACAC Program] program.

[Date] — More than [number] seniors across [state] received hands-on assistance applying to college during the [Name of State's ACAC Program] held on [Insert Event Date/Dates]. Roughly [insert number] college applications were submitted by [number] seniors from [your high school name].

[Insert other details specific to your event such as number of volunteers on hand, types of activities schools provided, etc].

[Insert quotes from state coordinator or Mayor or another high-profile official].

Additional information about the [Name of State's ACAC Program] can be found online at [State's ACAC Program Website].

For more information: [Insert website link or an email address] or

Contact: [Name of Site Coordinator]

Phone: [Site Coordinator's phone number]

[Indicate if photos are available upon request]

###

Understanding Financial Aid Award Letters

The Financial Aid Office at a college or university is responsible for sending information letters regarding financial aid. It is important that you read your award letters carefully to understand the type of aid being offered and how you indicate the aid you would like to accept. The information below is provided by the Financial Student Aid office of the U.S. Department of Education. For additional information on the various types of aid, definitions of common language found in financial aid award letters, a budget calculator to help you estimate the amount of aid you need, and other helpful information regarding paying for college, please visit their website at: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/>

When you receive an award letter, there may be a variety of aid options available. Be sure to read your letter **carefully** in order to make an informed decision about what aid you will accept. The general rule is: accept free money first (scholarships and grants), then earned money (work-study), and then borrowed money (federal student loans). The following outlines the order in which to accept specific types of aid and some important points to keep in mind.

1. The first type of aid to accept is aid that you do not need to pay back: **Scholarships and Grants**. Make sure you understand the conditions you must meet (for instance, you might have to maintain a certain grade-point average in order to continue receiving a scholarship, or a grant may turn into a loan if you don't follow specific requirements).
2. The second type of aid to accept is aid that you earn: through **work-study**. Keep in mind, you don't have to pay the money back, but you do have to work for it, so take into account that that'll mean less time for studying. However, research has shown that students who work part-time jobs manage their time better than those who don't!
3. The third type of aid to accept is **federal student loans**: You'll have to repay the money with interest. Subsidized loans don't start accruing (accumulating) interest until you leave school, so accept a subsidized loan before an unsubsidized loan.
4. The next type of aid to accept is **loans from your state government or your college**: You'll have to repay the money with interest, and the terms of the loan might not be as good as those of a federal student loan. Be sure to read all the fine print before you borrow.
5. The final type of aid to accept is **private loans**: You'll have to repay the money with interest, and the terms and conditions of the loan almost certainly will not be as good as those of a federal student loan.

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps#how-do-i-decide-what-aid-to-accept>

If accepting a loan, always accept the loan with the most favorable terms and conditions. If you have any questions or don't understand what types of loans are in your award letter, contact the Financial Aid Office at the college. Always ask questions and be an informed borrower. Make sure you understand what you're receiving and the repayment terms.

When it comes to loans, you should only borrow what you need. If your living expenses are not going to be as high as the amount estimated in the award letter, you can turn down the loan or to request a lower loan amount. In the award letter, the college will tell you how to do this. Use the budget calculator available on FSA's website to get an idea of your college expenses.

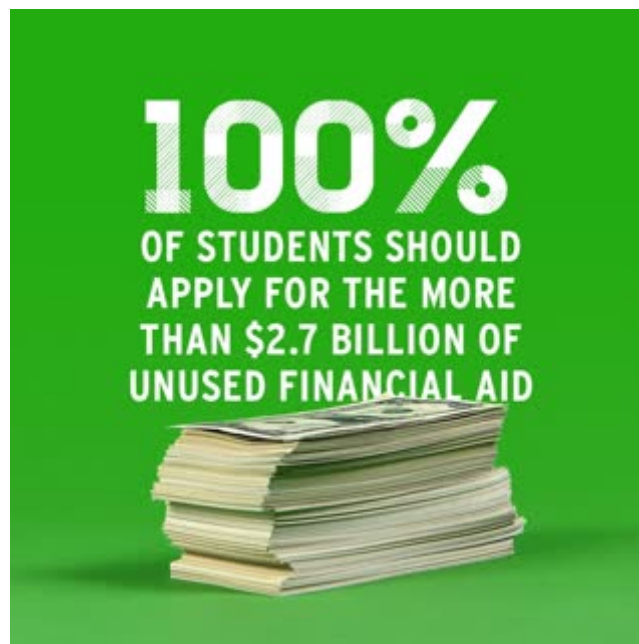
To tell the college what aid you are accepting, read and follow the directions on your award letter. Pay close attention to deadlines! If you have questions about your award letters, talk with your school counselor, call the Financial Aid Office at your college, and/or visit the FSA website (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/>).

FAFSA Awareness Campaign

Nearly all students would receive money for college if they applied for it, yet only [44 percent](#) of high school seniors do so before graduation. The National College Access Network's (NCAN) "[Form Your Future](#)" campaign urges young people -- particularly low-income, minority students who would be the first in their family to attend college -- to claim what is theirs and achieve their educational dreams by filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The campaign partners with celebrities and [social media](#) influencers with the goal of engaging students and reaching them on channels where they are most active. The [campaign website](#) also provides helpful free resources to volunteers and educators who want to provide one-on-one assistance on completing the FAFSA to students and their families, as well as ideas on how to spread the word and get others involved in the effort to encourage millions of students nationwide to apply for financial aid.

An outreach toolkit is available for download and includes sample social media content, morning announcement scripts, live radio reads, and promotional flyers.

www.FormYourFuture.org



College Signing Day



Former First Lady Michelle Obama and the Reach Higher team are encouraging all high schools to host College Signing Days. Similar to athletic signing days, during which high school seniors sign a letter-of-intent regarding the college they plan to attend, College Signing Days are an opportunity to recognize the important academic accomplishments of your graduating senior class.

Reach Higher and Better Make Room offer a free downloadable College Signing Day toolkit to assist you in planning your event. Nationally, College Signing Day is celebrated during the first week of May, but events dates range between April and May. Most colleges require that students sign enrollment commitment letters by May 1. Visit www.bettermakeroom.org.

Here are some suggestions for hosting your own College Signing Day to celebrate the important milestone of your students deciding where they will attend college in the fall. Pick one approach, create your own, or incorporate all of them into your celebration! The key to a College Signing Day is to have fun and celebrate!

1. **Host a College Signing Day pep rally or student assembly.** Have each senior come to the microphone and announce the college they plan to attend. Invite parents/guardians and high school underclassmen to attend the event to cheer each student's decision. Invite a speaker such as a college admissions representative, community member, high school principal, or district superintendent to open the event.
2. **Create a College Signing Day bulletin board.** Have students write their name and the college they are going to attend and post it on a bulletin board. Let your creativity flow in how the information is presented! Some ideas include: create a tree with branches and have student announcements on leaves; put a map of your state on the bulletin board and student announcements in the city/town they are attending college (have space for out-of-state students too!); have announcements written on graduation cap cutouts.
3. **Print it in the school and/or local newspaper.** Print college enrollment plans in your school newspaper, school newsletter, and/or the local newspaper. Some local newspapers may be willing to "donate" the page – so be sure to ask!
4. **Have a College Signing t-shirt Day.** On your College Signing Day event, ask students to wear a t-shirt of the school they will attend. Or, they can dress up in their school's colors. Encourage school staff to wear the t-shirts or colors of their alma mater too!
5. **Hand out nails with ribbons.** Encourage students and parents to hang the nail on the wall where the college diploma will eventually be displayed.

Link to a video of Houston's YES College Prep's College Signing Day event:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yp3DMAHh9s>

Link to a video of Michigan's College Decision Day campaign:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0emF1_irdk