ACAC
American College Application Campaign
ARKANSAS

College Application Month

FAFSA Frenzy
Site Coordinator Manual

Sponsored by

Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Career and Technical Education (DCTE)

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Introduction

The Arkansas College Application Campaign (ACAC) coordinates statewide initiatives designed to support high schools in helping students navigate the milestones in the college-going process and break down the barriers students often encounter during this process. These barriers include:
- Social Capital
- Academic Preparation
- College Knowledge – Navigating the Process
- Affordability

Since 2014, ACAC has supported an increasing number of statewide initiatives to fully encompass all of these milestones: College Application Month/FAFSA Frenzy in the fall and College Signing Day in the spring. These statewide initiatives are designed to be implemented during the school day, giving students the opportunity to complete college applications, file the FAFSA, and decide on a college with support from school counselors, administrators, teachers, and volunteers. This year, ACAC's structure is changing based on recent legislation pertaining to the FAFSA.

About ACAC

As the leader in the state's college access movement, ACAC's mission is to increase college readiness, participation and completion rates in Arkansas, particularly among low-income students, first-generation college going students, and students of color. We believe:

- **College is postsecondary education:** ACAC uses the term "college" to refer to the attainment of valuable postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees.

- **College is a necessity:** Postsecondary education is a prerequisite to success in a knowledge-based economy. Everyone must pursue and complete a postsecondary credential or degree beyond high school.

- **College is for everyone:** The postsecondary education attainment rates among low-income students and students of color are significantly lower than those of other students. ACAC is committed to closing these gaps.

- **College is a public good:** Postsecondary educational opportunity and attainment are critical to a just and equitable society, strong economy, and healthy communities.

For more information, please contact Sonja Wright-McMurray at Sonja.McMurray@ade.arkansas.gov or (501) 683-4432.

What is Arkansas College Application Campaign Month?

Arkansas College Month is part of a national initiative with the goal to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college and for financial aid. Special focus is placed on assisting students who would be the first in their families to attend college and students who may not have otherwise seriously considered applying to college. Arkansas College Application Campaign Month can open the door for students who may not have otherwise seriously considered applying to college. Arkansas College Application Campaign Month can open door for students by encouraging them to take the most significant steps toward college in their senior year. Arkansas College Application Campaign emphasizes the relationship between applying to and paying for college, and helps break down some of the most complex and commonly cited barriers to attending college.

Why the Month of October?

Due to the FAFSA now available in October, the most significant and intensive steps in the college-going process now happen in the fall. During Arkansas College Application Month, schools will have all of October to plan and implement events to support students as they apply to college and file the FASFA and Youniversal. The month-long structure gives schools the flexibility to schedule these events based on their local needs and challenges in order to best serve their students and families. Our hope is that by kicking-off this work in October, counselors will be able to use the following months to help those students who require additional support.

The goal of Arkansas College Application Campaign Month is that by the conclusion of October, every graduating senior will have applied to college and filed the FAFSA. Schools can accomplish this goal in a variety of ways, including:

- Setting aside time and space during the school day to help students submit college applications, create the FSA ID, and begin filling out the FASFA.

- Hosting financial aid nights to engage parents in the FAFSA process.

- Tracking their college application and FAFSA data throughout the month and doing targeted outreach and follow-up with the students who still need to complete these tasks.

- Hosting school-wide events and celebrations to build college-going culture and get students excited about college.

What is considered "College"?

College means any type of postsecondary education or training beyond high school. For the purposes of ACAC, college refers to the attainment of valuable postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees. Be sure that your events highlight and promote:

- Certificate Programs: Certificate programs are specialized plans of study that are usually intended for students planning to pursue a skilled trade. Most of these programs can be completed in a matter of months, and Arkansas public community and technical colleges offer several certificate programs throughout the year. Additionally, some employers and/or trade groups offer such programs.
- Associate Degrees: Associate degrees are typically awarded to students who complete a two-year period of study at a college. These degrees are often required for technical fields, but students can also pursue two-year degrees in business or other professional careers. Students can earn an associate degree at any of Arkansas's two-year and technical colleges.
- Bachelor's Degrees: Bachelor's degrees (or baccalaureate degrees) are typically awarded to students who complete a four-year period of study at a college or university. Students pursuing a bachelor's degree take classes in their career field and in general education subject areas.
- Apprenticeships: It is a structure system of training designed to prepare individuals for occupations in skilled trades and crafts. Apprenticeship combines related classroom instruction with on-the-job training under the supervision of experienced workers.

It also is important to keep the value of a college degree as a focus for events and discussions with students, to help combat common myths and negative media coverage on student loans and the value of a degree or certificate:

Greater Wealth: Individuals with a college degree earn an average of $32,000 more in annual earnings between a bachelor's degree and a high school diploma (*Source: Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities*).

- More Security: Those with a college degree are less likely to be effected by economic downturn. In fact, there are 11.5 million more jobs for Americans with a bachelor's degree or above than existed when the recent recession began (*Source: Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities*).

- Strong Investment: Unlike what many sensationalist media stories portray, the average student loan debt is actually around $25,921, and that number is even lower for public universities. In actuality, 42% of individuals with student loan debt have no debt, and for those with debt, the average college degree completely pays for itself within 15 years. (*Source: Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities*).

- Better Health: Individuals with a 4-year college degree are 70% more likely to engage in vigorous exercise and 70% less likely to be obese than those with only a high school diploma. (*Source: College Board*)

Section 1:
Planning Your College Application Campaign Month

With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your College Application Month will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school. *For some, this will be a traditional two or four college/university path. However, some students may choose the military, an apprenticeship or other technical training program. During this month, students should have all available opportunities for postsecondary education made available to them.* To reach as many students as possible, get the whole school involved and pull out all the stops.

As you begin to plan College Application Month at your school, tailor the events to the needs of your school. From the timing of events to the location, work with your school's administrators and teachers to plan an event that works best for your school and students.

In the following pages, you will find a checklist that can be tailored to your specific event, a page of helpful reminders for the day of your event, and tools to use throughout College Application Month.

IN THIS SECTION
- Site Coordinator Checklist
- Event Day Reminders
- Student Sign-in Sheet
- Reporting Procedure
- Data Reporting Requirements

Site Coordinator Checklist

Getting Started

- Review Site Coordinator training materials and contact Sonja Wright-McMurray at (501) 683- 4432 or sonja.mcmurray@ade.arkansas.gov if you have questions.

- Reserve a space for your event with computers and printers available.

- Notify teachers, counselors, and other school administrators (principal, athletic director, etc.) of your plans.

- Think about the following:
  - Which students and classes will be in the lab at what times?
  - What other college awareness activities will be available to students?
  - Will you plan activities for students who aren't seniors or aren't ready to submit an application yet?

Recruiting Support

- Recruit volunteers.

- Reach out to school staff and teachers to volunteer.

- Contact local colleges/universities and postsecondary training programs to invite admissions staff and faculty to volunteer during College Application Month.

- Reach out to local community organizations and parents to volunteer. The success of your program is directly tied to the strength of your volunteer workforce.

- Encourage all teachers to plan College Application Month-related activities.

- Solicit door prizes from community supporters.

- Ask local businesses and organizations to donate funds for application fees.

- Confirm attendance of all volunteers. Remind them of the time and place of your event and any other pertinent information.

- Remind teachers, counselors and administrators of the day's schedule and planned activities.

- Ask them to wear college clothing on event day and decorate their classrooms with "college- going culture" materials.

- Check with other college access programs in your school or district, such as GEAR UP, Upward Bound, or Talent Search, partnering organization, to see what their plans are for College Application Month or similar events.

Promoting Your Event

- E-mail the "Ask Me About" flyer (located on page 52) to all staff and request that they hang it on their door.

- Send a press release to local newspapers and TV stations announcing the event. This is a good way to ensure volunteer and community support.

- Reach out to parents about the event to help them prepare students.

Preparing Students

- Remind students to register for and take the ACT/SAT/ASVAB; have a list of registration deadlines and test dates available to students.

- Determine which seniors have not applied to a college/university or postsecondary training program and encourage them to attend a College Application Month event at your school and complete the application process.

- Check which of your students haven't yet applied for Arkansas Challenge and encourage them to apply for the scholarship during College Application Month – FAFSA Frenzy activities.

- Send student and parent letters notifying them of College Application Month and FAFAS Frenzy.

- Encourage students to meet with counselors to discuss fee waivers, if applicable.

Reminders for During Your Event(s)

For seniors filling out or submitting applications:

- Check all computers to ensure they are in working condition and pertinent websites are not blocked by your school or district.
- Post the following items in each computer lab or classroom where students will be completing online applications. Students may need to reference this information when completing applications.
  - High school name
  - School mailing address
  - Phone number
  - Fax number
  - School code
  - Each counselor's contact information, including e-mail address
  - ACT and SAT dates*

- Have all students sign in as they arrive. Refer to the sample sign-in sheet that is included in this toolkit on page 10.
- Students can post the "I Applied" College Application Month badge on their social media pages.
- Have your seniors fill out the College Application Month survey.
- Distribute the student handout "Now That I've Applied, What's Next?"(pg. 43) to reference during and after the application process.
- Be sure that students complete and submit application(s), print confirmation page(s), or save application(s) to finalize and submit in the next day or two.
- After your students have completed the desired amount of college applications:
  - Remind each of them to review "Now That I've Applied, What's Next?"
  - Distribute "I Applied" stickers (located on page 53)
  - Have your students fill out the College Application Month survey

College Application Campaign

CAREER COACH STUDENT SIGN-IN

CAREER COACH: _____ **SCHOOL:** _____

STUDENT NAME	STUDENT SIGNATURE	GRADE	DATE	TIME	I / D	REASON FOR VISIT							
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
				IN	I / D	CA	CP	CO	FA	ACC	CTECC	APP	WBL
				OUT									
	Grade:		Initial Contacts										
	Grade:		Duplicate Contacts										

Purpose of Visit Legend:
CA – Career Assessment, CP – Career Plan Developed/Modified, CO – College Admissions, FA – Financial Aid, ACC – Academic Concurrent Credit, CTECC – CTE Concurrent Credit, APP- Apprenticeship & WBL – Work Based Learning

Reporting Procedure

It is our goal that Arkansas College Application Month improves and expands each year. Collecting feedback and result data is an important part of accomplishing that goal. Please review the Data Reporting Requirements found on the following page.

As you plan your event, ensure that you track the information listed. You will need to keep track of the number of students who participate in your event and the total number of applications that are submitted. Please remember that students may fill out more than one application. **Site coordinators can find the ACAC School Coordinators survey in the following link:**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Cm7IRGXX4T5PCpjT8ADVOUsib7zuB8dLJuH492L4kxw/edit
Reporting Forms should be completed no later than **five (5) business days after the conclusion of your event**.

Additionally, please have **every participating senior** fill out the ACAC Student Survey during College Application Month. Link to senior survey: **https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1uuercazGqkfIYZaEKaT0cb3ahuo4LThq92kDUHZIc3g/edit**

If you are unable to complete the online reporting form, you may email the form on the following page to Sonja Wright-McMurray at sonja.mcmurray@ade.arkansas.gov.

DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Thank you for participating in the College Application Month. Please track the following data items to help us improve this initiative and better serve you in the future. During College Application Month **site coordinators can find the ACAC School Coordinators survey in the following link:**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Cm7IRGXX4T5PCpjT8ADVOUsib7zuB8dLJuH492L4kxw/edit

ACAC School Coordinator Survey
Due Date: October 5

Block 1 Questions – Contact Information

Career Coach: _____

High School: _____

Community College: _____

School CEBB Number _____

The CEBB number can be found in the following link:
https://www.topschoolsintheusa.com/high-school-codes-in-arkansas/

Block 2 Questions - Data

1. Total number of participating seniors _____

2. Number of seniors with SAT or ACT scores _____

3. How many seniors applied to at least one college during the Arkansas College Application Campaign? _____

4.   Date of College Application Night_____

    It refers to activities such as registering students for FAFSA, YOUniversal or college applications that take place after regular school hours. This activity will give working parents the opportunity to participate in the college going process at a time in which they may not be working.

5. Date of College Application Workshop_____
   This activity is primarily for students during the school hours.

6. How many college applications were submitted during Arkansas College Application Campaign? _____

7. How many college applications were submitted to the following types of postsecondary institutions during the Arkansas College Application Campaign? _____

Number of applications submitted:_____
Certificate programs: _____
2-year colleges: _____   4-year colleges: _____
Private colleges: _____   Public colleges: _____
In-state colleges: _____   Out-of-state colleges: _____

8. What is the PERCENT of students who have the following characteristics?

Percent of students who applied for the first time during your college application program____
Percent of students who are from low-income families_____

Percent of students who are first-generation:

Other student-level data collected:

9. Did any of the following entities in your school district participate in your college application program?

	Yes	No
Middle Schools	____	____
Elementary Schools	____	____
Preschools	____	____
Community Based Organizations	____	____

10. How many sites were engaged for each of the following location types?
Middle Schools _____
Elementary Schools _____
Preschools _____
Community Based Organizations _____

11. How many students were engaged for each of the following location types?

Middle Schools _____
Elementary Schools _____
Preschools _____
Community Based Organizations _____

12. Date of FASFA Frenzy Activity_____

It should be an activity when FAFSA and YOUniversal information is provided/ applications are completed.

13. Number of FAFSA Applications Submitted _____

14. Number of YouUniversal Applications Submitted_____

15. Number of College Application Surveys Submitted (Seniors)_____

16. Describe Arkansas College Application Marketing Plan_____

17. Do you collect data regarding where students apply to college during your college application event? _____

18. If you have any comments, thoughts, or suggestions regarding the Arkansas College Application registration page, please provide those here:

Success Stories

If you have a great news story, success story, or videos from your College Application Campaign, please email them to mariaelena.deavila@ade.arkansas.gov. We would also love any photos from your event that we would have permission to share or use in Arkansas College Application Campaign or with the national American College Application Campaign. Make sure students' pictures are accompanied by the photo release form below.

Arkansas College Application Campaign (ACAC) Student Survey October

Please have every participating senior fill out the ACAC Student Survey during College Application Month. Link to student senior survey: **https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1uuercazGqkfIYZaEKaT0cb3ahuo4LThq92kDUHZIc3g/edit**

1. High School Name:
2. Career Coach Name:
3. Student Name:
4. Plans for After High School
   a. 2-year college
   b. 4-year college
   c. Certificate Program
   d. Apprenticeship
   e. Military
   f. Work
5. Did you register for a post-secondary institution?
6. Did you apply for FAFSA?
7. Did you apply for Youniversal?

Photo Release Form

I, _____, hereby agree and consent to allow the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), and anyone authorized by ADE, to use the name, school district, and hometown and to reproduce, edit, alter, or publish photographs, audio, and video recordings of my child, children, or myself and their/my work products ("my/child's information") without payment or any other consideration.

I understand that the ADE owns a copyright and all other media distribution rights for any publication in which my/child's information appears and may exclusively use this in any manner, in whole or in part, including print, broadcast, digital media, or online. I understand that publications containing my/child's information will become property of ADE and will not be returned.

Furthermore, I, on behalf of myself, my child or children, and any person acting on our behalf, herby consent and agree to release any and all claims or causes of action against ADE and any of its associates, employees, or agents associated with the release of my/child's information that is in the possession or control of ADE and is used or released as part of the normal course of business of the ADE.

_____   _____
Parent's Name or Adult (Please print)   Child's Name or Children's Names (Please print)

_____
Signature of Parent or Adult (Please sign in cursive)

_____
Date

COLLEGE APPLICATION TIPS FOR SENIORS

The following information can help you to learn more about the college application process and assist students in completing their applications.

Important Dates:

- **College Application Month:** October
- **FAFSA Applications Available:** October 1
- **YOUniversal Application Available:** October 1

Students should have the following items to aid in the process, but not required:

- Personal and educational data (e.g., name, address, social security number, phone number, e- mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools attended, college credits earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
- Honors and awards
- Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities
- Employment, internships, and summer activities (some colleges allow applications to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application)
- Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
- Disciplinary information
- Application fee (many colleges will accept fee waivers—ask a counselor)

Section 2:
Getting Support for Your College Application Month Events

The success of your College Application Month relies not just on you, but on your school and your community. Engaging the school community in the planning and implementation process will create excitement about the event. And the more support you have, the more success you will see. Additionally, the community plays an important role in creating and sustaining a college-going culture.

In the following pages, you will find ideas for engaging students, school faculty, and members of the community, including a volunteer resource guide that will help you to prepare your volunteers for event day.

IN THIS SECTION
- Who to Involve
- Volunteer Resource Guide
- Volunteer Quick Guide to College Application Month
- Volunteer College Application Tips
- Sample Volunteer Recruitment Email/Letter
- Sample Donation Request Letter

Who to Involve

Students

- Recruit students to help implement College Application Month. Identify student leaders who would love to bring their own ideas to the table.
- Select "student ambassadors" and educate them on the purpose of College Application Month. Ask them to share implementation ideas and distribute materials.
- Ask students to promote College Application Month through their social media accounts.

Teachers

- Teachers are your greatest allies in motivating students to pursue higher education. We recommend enlisting their help to make your school's College Application Month a huge success. Share your planning with them and ask for their help in brainstorming ways to make this event something the whole school embraces.
- Ask teachers to take time during College Application Month to talk to each of their classes about their college experience.
- Suggest that teachers use College Application Month to encourage their students to come up with ideas on how to market an event to their peers.
- Have teachers recruit "student ambassadors" to help decorate the school, distribute College Application Month materials, and encourage their friends to participate in College Application Month.
- Ask them to dedicate at least one class during College Application Month to plan college application related activities such as essay writing.

Volunteers/Community Representatives

- Volunteer and community involvement is crucial to the success of your event. Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your College Application Month a success by donating time and/or resources. Some examples may include:

  - Middle School Students (8th graders)
  - School Alumni
  - Students' families, PTA, School Improvement Council
  - Your school's athletic department and coaches
  - Retired educators
  - Volunteer, senior, or church groups
  - Community college and university representatives and faculty
  - Business, community, and political leaders
  - City, County, and/or State elected officials
  - Youth programs (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, 4H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts)
  - College access organizations in your school or community
- Check with your school's leaders about policies for visitors on your campus.
- Provide volunteers with an information sheet of college application tips, prior to the event.

- Send all potential volunteers and/or groups a College Application Month recruitment email/letter with an event explanation and details.
- Consider asking local companies or organizations to donate funds for application fees during College Application Month.
- Ask volunteers to promote College Application Month through their social media accounts.

Volunteer Resource Guide

The success of your College Application Month is dependent upon the strength of your volunteer workforce. Therefore, it is essential to recruit volunteers to ensure the success of your program. Below is a guide you can follow to ensure you have a well-informed and efficient volunteer force.

Notify Them

Once you have recruited and finalized your volunteer roster for College Application Month, you will need to notify them of the event details. You can use the template on the next page as a guide.

Give Them Options

Volunteer opportunities can range from greeting students to helping them fill out the applications. Below is a list of possible opportunities. Add in your event-specific needs and use this as a tool to help volunteers choose a task.

- Greet students
- Sign in students
- Monitor the computer lab
- Assist students with the completion of online college applications
- Distribute information about financial aid opportunities
- Distribute important instruction sheets

Identify Them

Help identify your volunteers as a source of help for students by providing name badges for volunteers on the day of the event.

Train Them

On the morning of the event, conduct a quick orientation to familiarize volunteers with details of your event. Consider walking them through a typical college application. The training is also a good time to review key terms they're likely to hear during the event, such as Arkansas Challenge, ACT, FAFSA, Common App, and other college-focused terms.

Thank Them

Send a thank-you letter to all volunteers for their dedication to College Application Month. Handwrite a note to each volunteer. You may also want to give students the opportunity to thank the volunteers as well.

VOLUNTEER QUICK GUIDE

Welcome to College Application Month! We appreciate your hard work and dedication to making college a reality for our students. Use this reference guide to familiarize yourself with the details of our College Application Month program.

What is College Application Month?
College Application Month is an initiative offered in school districts served by the Arkansas Career Coach Program sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Career and Technical Education (CTE).

What is the goal of College Application Month?
The goal of the Arkansas College Application Month is to build excitement around the college application process and provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply, with a focus placed on first-generation students and students who may not otherwise apply to college. We define college as any formal education after high school.

How do I address questions about application fees and fee waivers?
For colleges that require an application fee, students can use credit/debit cards online for some colleges, or print their online application(s) to mail with a check to the college(s). Should students have questions about eligibility for fee waivers, please refer them to their school counselor.

What are their next steps?
In order to be eligible for financial aid, college applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after October 1 of their senior year. The earlier students complete and submit this form, the better! Also, refer students to the "Now That I've Applied, What's Next?" (Page 43) handout that their teacher or counselor has given them.

In addition, students should be encourage to apply to the State of Arkansas Scholarships System though the YOUniversal Scholarship application.

Sample Volunteer Recruitment Email/Letter

This letter should be distributed to any volunteer prospects and/or groups. Update the bold pieces with your school's event information and feel free to add more event details to generate interest.

[School Logo]

[School Address]

Dear [**Name of Organization]**,

[Name of Your High School] is pleased to announce its participation in the Arkansas College Application Campaign Month during the month of October. The goal of College Application Month, which is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Career and Technical Education (DCTE) and [**Your College and/or School District]**, is to provide a forum for to complete and file college applications. While the focus is on helping all students, special attention should be given to first-generation, minority, and students who might not otherwise apply to college.

We will be hosting our event on [**Date(s)]** and would welcome representatives from [**Name of Organization]** to visit our school during this exciting and important time. With your help, students can connect to resources available outside of the classroom that will help them prepare for college. Volunteers can greet and sign in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Our students will look to your help and support as they take a big step in the direction of going to college.

If you or any of your colleagues at [**Name of Organization]** are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact [**Name, Contact Info** at **Name of Your College/and or School District]**.

Thank you,

[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]

College Application Month Donation Request Letter

This letter should be distributed to any local companies or organizations who may be able to donate funds for application fees during College Application Month.

[School Logo/Name]
 [School Address]

[Date]

[Address of Recipient]

Dear **[Name of Contact's Name or Organization/Company]**,

I am writing to you on behalf of the senior class of **[high school]**. This year our class is excited to celebrate College Application Month during the month of October. College Application Month is designed to build excitement around the college application process and give every senior the opportunity to apply to college. The College Application Month also helps students to overcome barriers that often discourage them from applying, which often includes financial barriers, such as application fees. We're asking for your help in donating fees to students who may struggle to pay these application fees, which can be as high $40 or more at some institutions.

A donation from **[insert company name]** will go directly to student application fees and for many students will make the difference between applying and not applying to college. Our students have worked hard to become college ready, and we are asking for your investment in them to not only encourage their education, but also to encourage the growth of our skilled and educated workforce.

Thank you for considering our request. If you would like to make a donation, volunteer in any way with College Application Month, or would like further information, please feel free to contact me at **[insert contact information]**.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Title

Section 3:
Promoting Your Event

Promoting your school's College Application Month is crucial. While much of the focus for College Application Month is geared toward seniors, a truly successful event has the entire school community actively engaged. In the following pages, you'll find ideas and sample activities you can use to promote the event to all those involved both within your school community and outside the walls of your school.

IN THIS SECTION

- In-School Promotion Ideas
- Promoting College Application Month to the Media
- Hello My Name Is: Activity
- Sample Press Release
- Sample Student/Family Letter

In-School Promotion Ideas

Get the Word Out
Use daily public announcements to generate awareness of College Application Month activities at your school. If your school has a morning news program, coordinate with producers to feature a countdown or a fun fact each morning leading up to the event. Coordinate interviews with students who plan to attend/participate in the event. Student newspapers are also a great place to highlight the event. Encourage student writers to feature stories. You may even wish to place an ad in the paper.

"Ask Me About" Flyers
Have all members of your school's faculty and staff fill out a "Ask Me About" flyer and post it outside of their room or office. These flyers could be posted year-round to encourage students to ask teachers, administrators, and other staff members about the colleges they attended.

"I Applied" Stickers
Give students an "I Applied" sticker after they have completed their application

Host a Pep Rally
Talk with your school administrators about holding a kick-off pep rally to get everyone in the college frame of mind. Ask students to wear college gear from their favorite schools. Introduce seniors who have already been accepted into a school or apprenticeship program and have them tell the student body the one thing they are most looking forward to in college or trade school, why they selected the school or program they did, or any first-hand account of actions already taken.

Friendly Competition
Sponsor a class contest between the different grades to inspire all students to take the college preparation process seriously during College Application Month. Classes compete against each other to have the most students taking action. Keep a record on your school website or Facebook page.

Daily College Trivia Announcements
During College Application Month, make daily announcements with College Trivia or fun facts. If you do a trivia question, offer a small prize for the first student to turn in the correct answer.

Dress the Part
During College Application Month, encourage teachers and staff to wear a t-shirt, sweatshirt, or hat from the college they attended, or have them bring in their college yearbook or other items with their college mascot to share with students. You can also encourage students to dress in the colors and apparel of their favorite college or college sports team for a day.

Host Homeroom/ Advisory Period Workshops
Conduct workshops during homeroom with students throughout College Application Month. Some examples may include the following:

- Freshmen: Decision making, learning styles, study habits, high school transcript and academic planning, connection between school and careers, how to qualify for a scholarship, colleges and the degrees offered, college admission criteria, etc.
- Sophomores: Progress reports, extracurricular activities, earning college credit during high school, world of work, college costs and ways to pay, college visits, etc.
- Juniors: Money management, finding scholarships, admission process, college entrance exams, preparing to apply, writing personal statements and essays, etc.
- Seniors who have already applied to college: what to expect in college, resume writing, FAFSA, YOUniversal, +searching for scholarships, finding the right college for you, etc.

Dress the School
Create a "College Wall." Encourage seniors to write the names of the colleges to which they have applied on banners or strips of construction paper to hang in a main hallway. Highlight college names when acceptances are received. If available, enlist the support of art teachers, as they may be helpful in developing additional promotional materials to create a "college-going culture" on the walls of your school.

Invite Guest Speakers
Invite admissions staff from local colleges/universities to provide general information related to their campus, including the majors offered, admission requirements, application process, and cost of attendance.

Give Away College Stuff
Hold drawings during College Application Month. Ask colleges and universities to donate promotional items (banners, hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) to use as giveaways during your event. Also, ask local businesses for items for your drawing.

Communicate
Send letters or e-mail reminders to all parents, students, and school staff. Also, include information in the school newsletter and post fliers around the school and community about your College Application Month event. You can use the Sample Student/Family Letter at the end of this section as a guide (Page 28).

Promoting College Application Month
to the Media

Inviting local media to your College Application Month is a great way to increase public awareness of your school's activities and promotion of a college-going culture in Arkansas. Here are some tips for contacting the media:

1. **Write a press release:** Write a brief press release with information about your College Application Month events and activities. (See page 27 for a template for your press release.)

2. **Distribute the press release:** Send out the press release to your local media outlets approximately two weeks before College Application Month. If you email a copy of the press release, send the release directly in the body of your email. This will help your email avoid spam filters. If you can, send the email from an address linked to a person's name (rather than a general organizational mailbox). Tip: If you or someone on staff at your school has a relationship with the media or a specific reporter, have that person reach out and/or follow up with the media. Also try reaching out to reporters who have covered your school(s) previously.

3. **Follow up once you send the press release:** Once you have sent the press release, follow up by phone to make sure the newsroom received the press release. Prepare a small script ahead of time with the most important information. Prepare to be brief on the phone- newsrooms and reporters are usually busy and being prepared when you speak to them will help you keep their attention.

4. **Designate a media point-of-contact:** Choose someone involved with College Application Month to be the point person for any members of the media who may attend. The media point- of-contact should be prepared to greet anyone from the media who attends any College Application Month events and direct them to students, faculty, or anyone else willing to be interviewed for a news piece.

5. **Follow up the day before any big events:** The day before any big College Application Month events (or the Friday before), follow up with your media targets by phone or email to remind them of the event and/ or confirm their attendance, and give them contact information for your designated media point-of-contact.

6. **During College Application Month:** Make sure parking is available for any media and that your school's front office is aware that media may be arriving. Ensure that your media point-of- contact is prepared to answer basic questions about your College Application Month events, including the events and activities your school is hosting, the number of seniors at your school, and your most recent college-going rates. Try to get contact information from any media that attend so you have their contact information for future events/announcements and to send a follow-up thank you.

Sample Press Release

Send this sample press release to local news organizations. Update the bold pieces with your school's event information and add any other relevant event details. If you need help locating contact information for your local news outlets, please contact Maria Elena de Avila (mariaelena.deavila@ade.arkansas.gov) at the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Career and Technical Education (ADE-DCTE).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For more information, please contact:
Name,
Phone,
E-mail Address

SCHOOL NAME HOSTS COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH

CITY, AR (DATE) - In an effort to promote college awareness and access, **Name of Your High School** will participate in College Application Month, sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Career and Technical Education (ADE-DCTE) and Your College/School during the month of October.

The goal of Arkansas College Application Campaign Month is to provide seniors the opportunity to complete and file college applications with the support of their school. Seniors will also be encouraged to complete Arkansas Challenge applications during the event.

While much of the focus of College Application Month is geared toward first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, **Name of Your High School** will also offer college-focused activities for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have already applied to college. This is the 5th annual College Application Month in Arkansas and the **Insert Number** time it has been held at **Name of Your High School**.

Name of Career Coach, College Application Month event Career Coach for Name of Your High School, is expecting more than **Insert Number** seniors to participate with the help of **Insert Number** volunteers from **Insert names of School Faculty/Administration/College/ Community Resources that will help.**

For more information about the **Name of Your High School** College Application Month event, please contact **Name of Site Coordinator and contact information**.

Sample Student/Family Letter

Update the bold pieces with your school's event information and add any other event details.

School Logo School

Address

Dear Students and Families,

The Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in collaboration with **high school and/or college name** is pleased to announce that has designated the month of October as Arkansas College Application Month. Throughout this month, high schools across the state will host College Application Month events to assist students with the college application process. On Date(s) of Event, all seniors expected to graduate in May/ June (insert current year) will be encouraged to complete at least one online application for admission to a higher education institution, if they have not already done so. This event is possible due to the collaborative efforts of the administration, faculty, and staff at **Name of Your High School**, as well as students, their families, and volunteers across the community.

The goal of College Application Month is to provide the opportunity for all Arkansas seniors to complete and file college applications. In order to participate fully, prior to College Application Month, students will need to research the institutions to which they want to apply. Families are welcome to visit **Name of Your High School on Date(s) of Event** to assist their student during the application process. In addition, we encourage family members to volunteer during the event. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact **Name, Title, at (000) 000-0000**. Volunteers can greet and sign in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities.

As part of the college application process during College Application Month, your student will likely need to know their social security number and have access to a credit card to pay application fees. If either of these presents a problem, please call our school counseling office or have your student speak with a school counselor. If you have any questions please call **Name, Title, at (000) 000-0000**.

Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative to encourage Arkansas students to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Section 4:
Planning Your College Application Month

This section guides you through activities that your school can host during College Application Month. Whether you work in a high school or a middle school, College Application Month has something to offer for each student, not just seniors beginning to apply for college. Key information in this section includes activity ideas for students from middle school through high school and information about applying for the Arkansas Challenge scholarship. Also, you will find handouts for students.

IN THIS SECTION

- Planning Timeline
- Sample Month Activity Schedule
- College Application Month at Middle Schools
- College Application Month at High Schools
- College Application Month Sample Timeline for Just Seniors
- College Application Month Sample Timeline for High School
- College Application Month Sample Timeline for Middle School
- Student Handout: Answer to Student FAQs
- Student Handout: Preparing for College App Month
- Student Handout: Now That I've Applied, What's Next?
- Student Handout: Parts of a College Application

Arkansas College Application Campaign Planning Timeline

		September
Date Completed	Recommended completion date (week of)	Task
	September 7	Set up a College Access Committee or team at your school to discuss the timeline of events and activities. This may include school counselors, teachers, students, administrators, parents/guardians, etc.
	September 7	Brainstorm how you will call students down to receive support. By last name? By a required or homeroom class?
	September 7	Plan a detailed ACAC schedule and communicate this schedule to school staff and administration.
	September 7	Reserve a computer lab for your planned event days.
	September 7	Send letters to businesses and colleges asking for donations to be used as prizes during ACAC (an example letter is provided in the site coordinator resources folder). • Offer businesses an ACAC poster to hang in their window in exchange for donations. • Remind them to wear college gear/hang college flags during ACAC.
	September 8	Plan and/or secure a financial aid presentation (whether you conduct it or bring in a speaker).
	September 8	ACAC host site registration becomes available.
	September 9	Plan and prepare outreach and publicity efforts to get the word out about your events in your community. Discuss with your team possible volunteers and/or speakers to recruit.
	September 9	Confirm event dates with the school and district's master calendar.
	September 9	Confirm the event date(s) with the school and district's technology team to ensure the computer labs are ready to go. • If paper applications are needed, request copies via your college representative. • Have printer accessible if student is unable to complete the application online. Verify that there are no firewall issues with institutional websites.
	September 10	Verify which students have not yet applied to college by this point and encourage those students to meet with counselors/develop a plan. Also encourage students to create their FSA ID at this time.

	September 11	Send student and parent letter (see example in the Site Coordinator Manual folder. Notify both students and parents of evening and/or daytime information session(s) available to them assist them in preparing information needed for the event. • Remind them that students will need a form of payment to apply to a college or university with application fees. While a credit card is often preferred, if a credit card is not possible, the student can print the application and mail it in with a check. Students should also have their Social Security Number available.
	September 11	Contact your college or university admissions office for help recruiting volunteers. We estimate you will need 3-4 volunteers in addition to the site coordinator when working with groups of 20-25 students. (Approximately 1 volunteer for every 6 students).
	September 16	**Participate in the ACAC National Social Media Campaign (#WhyApply).**
	September 28	Promote your event by adding information to: • Morning/afternoon announcements (schedule for October) • School website • Official school kiosk/outdoor signs • School newspaper • School newsletter (to staff, parents, community)
	September 28	Encourage teachers to relate lesson plans to Arkansas College Application Campaign Month throughout October
	September 28	Give the "Ask Me About It" flyer to all staff and request they hang it on their door (template provided in the Site Coordinator Manual).
	September 28	Finalize guest speaker arrangements for any pep rallies/assemblies (if applicable).
	September 28	• Finalize volunteer list for the coming month. Confirm the time and place for all volunteers • Provide school visitor/volunteer policy (if applicable) • Encourage them to wear college clothing • Ensure that all volunteers have the necessary security clearance to assist in the school during College Application Campaign Month.

OCTOBER

Throughout the month of October, depending on your event schedules, you should be focusing on/accomplishing the following:		
Date Completed	Recommended completion date (week of)	Task
	October 1	Arkansas College Month kicks off!
	October 1	FAFSA becomes available for students and families to complete using prior-prior-year tax information.
	October 4	Participate in Arkansas Virtual College Fair if possible.
	During ACAC	Host student/parent/guardian event(s) (day and/or night) to assist students and parents/guardians who have questions or need additional help with prep work, college apps, or the FAFSA.
	During ACAC	Remind teachers, counselors, administrators of the schedule and activities. Ask them to wear college clothing on event day and decorate their classrooms with "college-going culture" materials.
	During ACAC	Conduct Volunteer Orientation morning of event(s), if necessary.
	During ACAC	Partner with your counselor's office and track completion of financial aid applications. Follow up with students who have not yet filed their FAFSA.
	During ACAC	Remember to take pictures during ACAC events and upload them to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. using the hashtags #IApplied, #ArCAC and #ReachHigher.
	During ACAC	Mail NACAC Request for Admission Application Waivers to respective institutions.
	During ACAC	Submit student transcripts to respective institutions.
	During ACAC	Send thank you letters to volunteers.

Sample College Application Campaign

Month Schedule

Sample Half-Block Schedule – 2 computer labs (by block teacher's name)

	Computer Lab A	Computer Lab B
8:05 – 8:45 AM	Block 1 Kincaid	Block 1 Smith
8:50 – 9:30 AM	Block 1 Robinson	Block 1 Andrews
9:40 – 10:20 AM	Block 2 Fisher	Block 2 Synder
10:25 – 11:10 AM	Block 2 Hundley	Block 2 Hunt

Lunch Break

12:05 – 12:50 PM	Block 3 Boyd	Block 3 Page
12:55 – 1:35 PM	Block 3 Horowitz	Block 3 Anderson
1:40 – 2:20 PM	Block 4 Combs	Block 4 Lopez

Sample Open Schedule – 1 computer lab (by senior's last name)

	Computer Lab A
8:05 – 8:45 AM	A-Co
8:50 – 9:30 AM	Cr-Fi
9:40 – 10:20 AM	Fl-K
10:25 – 11:10 AM	Ke-O

Lunch Break

12:05 – 12:50 PM	Or-Ru
12:55 – 1:35 PM	S-Z
1:40 – 2:20 PM	Make-up

Sample Required Senior Class – 1 computer lab (Priority days and Thursday make-up day)

	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:05 – 8:45 AM			
8:50 – 9:30 AM	English 12 (Media Center)	English 12 (Media Center)	English 12 (Media Center)
9:40 – 10:20 AM			
10:25 – 11:10 AM			

Lunch Break

	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday
12:05 – 12:50 PM	English 12 (Media Center)	English 12 (Media Center)	English 12 (Media Center)
12:55 – 1:35 PM			
1:40 – 2:20 PM			

College Application Month at Middle Schools

It's never too early to promote a college going culture in your schools! Middle schools present an excellent opportunity to start getting students excited about post-secondary education.

The focus of College Application Month at high schools is applying to postsecondary education; at the middle school level, College Application Month encourages students to start thinking about college and begin planning for their future.

College Gear Day
- Encourage teachers and staff to wear apparel from their alma mater. Students can wear apparel from their favorite postsecondary institution.
- This is a great way for teachers to start a conversation about their college experience.

Door Decorating Contest
- Create college buzz with some friendly competition. Which homeroom can design the most creative college themed door decoration?

Homeroom Workshops
- Create mini-lessons for topics like decision making and setting goals that teachers can implement.

Guest Speakers
- Recruit professionals from the community to talk to students about their careers and postsecondary experience.

Teacher Involvement
- Encourage teachers to take some time and share their postsecondary experience.
- Create "College Door Signs." Each teacher can fill in their alma mater and display it.

Bring College to the Middle School
- Invite representatives from local colleges to talk to students about their institutions
- Invite local alumni who are attending college or recently graduated to share their experiences with college
- Take students on virtual college tours through the college websites.

College Facts Trivia
- Ask College Trivia questions on the morning announcements or during lunch

College Application Month at High Schools

Just for Seniors

College Application Checklist
- Provide your seniors with a checklist of information and materials (i.e. ACT scores, transcripts, application fee) they will need for College Application Workshop so they are prepared to successfully complete an application.

College Application Workshop (Required)
- Reserve a computer lab and have your seniors sign up for times to complete their applications. Hand out "I Applied" stickers after students complete their applications!

FAFSA and YOUniversal Frenzy Event (Required)
- Reserve a computer lab and have your seniors sign up for times to complete their applications. During this event, students should complete the FAFSA application and be encourage to complete the YOUniversal scholarship application too.

For All Students

College Application Night (Required)
- Invite students and parents to a college information night and have their questions answered by school counselors and local college representatives

Host a College Fair
- Invite college admissions representatives to your school to help students learn more about their institutions.

Host a Pep Rally
- Talk with your school administrators about holding a kick-off pep rally to get everyone in the college frame of mind. Ask students to wear college gear from their favorite schools. Introduce seniors who have already been accepted into a school or apprenticeship program and have them tell the student body the one thing they are most looking forward to in college or trade school, why they selected the school or program they did, or any first-hand account of actions already take. Or hold a pep rally at the end of the month to celebrate the seniors who applied to college.

Friendly Competition
- Sponsor a class contest between the different grades to inspire all students to take the college preparation process seriously during College Application Month. Classes compete against each other to have the most students taking action. Keep a record on your school website or Facebook page.

Virtual College Tour
- Provide students with "scavenger hunt" list to find on a college website.

Teacher Talk
- Encourage teachers to take a few minutes during the ACAC Month to share their college experience.

College Application Month Sample Timelines

Just for Seniors

Monday

- Application Prep: Help student prepare to successfully complete their applications. Remind them of the information they need to collect to fill out their application later in the month. A checklist with items like ACT score and application fee is helpful.

Tuesday

- Host a College Fair: Give students the opportunity to learn more about local schools and have their application questions answered by admissions counselors.

Wednesday

- Host a Personal Statement workshop: Provide helpful tips and ideas for writing a personal statement.

Thursday

- College Application workshops: Encourage all seniors to complete at least one college application today.

Friday

- College Pep Rally: Celebrate the hard work of your seniors as they've completed their applications and build excitement among the underclassmen.

College Application Month Sample Timelines

For Your Entire High School

Monday
- College Application Night: Invite students and parents to a college information night and have their questions answered by school counselors and local college representatives.

Tuesday
- Host a College Fair: Invite college admissions representatives to your school to help students learn more about their institutions.

Wednesday
- College Door Decorating Contest: Encourage homerooms to decorate their doors in a college theme.

Thursday
- College Panel: Invite guest speakers to come talk about their college experiences and how it led them to their current careers.

Friday
- College Pep Rally: Celebrate the hard work of your seniors as they've completed their applications and build excitement among the underclassmen.

- College Colors Day: Encourage students, faculty and staff to wear college t-shirts

STUDENT HANDOUTS SECTION

Answers to Student FAQs

Students will have a lot of questions about the college application process, especially if they are a first generation college student. Listed here are the answers to some common questions about online applications.

How do I submit my essay?

Please note some applications will require an admission essay or a personal statement. Remind students to bring their essay(s) with them. Some applications will allow the file to be uploaded. Others may require them to copy and paste from an existing document (which they may have stored on an external device such as a flash drive). Most essay questions are open-ended, but some may have word minimum and/or maximum limits. If there is a word limit, it will be specified within the essay question. If a student submits an essay that is too short or long, an error will be issued, and the student will need to revise his or her essay.

How do I submit official transcripts?

Most colleges and universities require applicants to submit a transcript, including their senior year schedule. Please develop a process that will allow your students to notify you of the colleges to which they would like you to send their official transcripts.

How do I submit official test scores?

If you have already taken the ACT or SAT and aren't sure if you sent your scores to your colleges of choice, you can contact both testing organizations (ACT or the College Board) about having your test score sent to additional colleges. Both organizations allow you to do this either on the web, over the phone, or by mail. Typically, fees will be involved with sending these test scores. To be sure if a college has received your test scores, call the admissions office at the school.

Is my information confidential?

Assure parents and students that all information submitted for official online applications is secure and confidential

Preparing for College App Month: Instruction Sheet

Research Your College Options

Check out desired colleges and universities. Gather detailed information about a variety of colleges and universities.

Research Application Deadlines

While you are researching colleges, find out what deadlines, if any, campuses have for applications. Some schools will not accept applications after a certain date, so if you have a favorite school, make sure to find out early in your search what the application schedule is.

Some colleges also have different deadlines for different types of applications. Most schools will have a traditional application deadline, during which most of their applications are received. At some colleges, you can apply early (typically before December 1) as part of the "Early Decision" deadline, which will mean that if you are accepted at that school, you've committed to attending. "Early Action" deadlines typically come a few weeks after early decision deadlines and the applications aren't binding. If a school offers early action applications, that school will respond to your application early, but you're not committed to attend or make an earlier choice than you would with a traditional application.

Prepare for Application Fees

Most colleges require an application fee when you submit an online application. The introduction page to the application will inform you of the fee amount, if any. Unless you have a fee waiver from your school counselor, you need to be prepared to enter a credit/debit card number or mail a check once you complete your online application. If you think you may be eligible for an application fee waiver, contact your high school counselor.

Prepare Essay(s) and /or Personal Statement(s)

What if you are required to submit an admission essay or personal statement? Bring your essay(s) with you preloaded on a jump drive so that you can easily copy your essay into your online application. Make sure you have a hard copy as well for back-up. You will be able to upload your essay file or copy and paste it during the online application session.

Parts of a College Application

It is **your** responsibility to make sure that all of your college applications and all supporting materials are sent to the colleges to which you wish to apply. Your high school is responsible for sending the transcript and secondary school report (if required). **BUT** you, the student, are responsible for following your school's policy for requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations. Know what you are expected to do!

Listed below is everything that could be required, but you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. Also, there are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

1. Official Transcript: Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. Other information that might be included: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

2. Standardized Test Scores: ACT or SAT scores. Most colleges require that your scores be sent directly from the College Board or ACT.

3. The Application Form: You are responsible for requesting an application form, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online). Many colleges accept The Common Application. No matter what school or what application, these will be important components:
    *   Personal and educational data (e.g., name, address, phone number, e-mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
    *   Honors and awards
    *   Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities
    *   Employment, internships, and summer activities (some colleges allow you to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application)
    *   Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
    *   Disciplinary information
    *   Application fee (many colleges will accept fee waivers—ask a counselor)
    *   Signature

- For certain majors, you may be required to audition or submit a portfolio of artistic work.

4. Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form: This is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, you are responsible for submitting this form to the college.

5. Mid-Year Report Form: This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is required, it will be submitted by your high school; however, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.

6. Teacher Recommendation Form: This form is not required by all colleges; however, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over this form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you.

Now That I've Applied, What's Next?

Congratulations! You are one step closer to college! You have finished a big step, but you still have a few more things to consider before you complete the college application process.

How do I pay for application fees?

You may be required to pay an application fee for some college applications or you may qualify for a fee waiver to cover the cost of application fees. For further information on fee waivers, speak directly with your school counselor. If you are required to pay, here are a few payment options:

CHECK Once you have submitted your online application, you can send a check in the mail to that school. Be sure to include a copy of your confirmation page with your payment.

CREDIT CARD You can pay with a credit card online. Check to see what cards each school accepts (e.g., Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover). If you decide to pay with a credit card, the following information is required:

- Type of card
- Credit card number
- Expiration date
- Name as it appears on the card
- Security code (the three- or four-digit number on the back of the card)

What about additional information?

Depending on the school, you may be required to submit additional information to complete the application process. They may ask you to submit essays, test scores, and/or transcripts. It is best to find out the application requirements for each school you plan to apply to prior to completing the online application. Do not delay submission of those documents. The sooner you submit them, the sooner you'll receive a response from the school.

How do I confirm submission of my application?

Once you have completed and submitted your application, you will often be directed to a confirmation page. Make sure you print this page for your records, and some schools may require you to submit a signed copy to complete the application process.

When will I hear from the schools?

The schools' admissions offices should contact you through e-mail or by letter once you have submitted all the requirements for the application process. If you do not hear from them within one to two weeks, contact the admissions offices of the schools you applied to and follow up on your application status.

Section 5:
Planning Your FAFSA Frenzy Activities

This section guides you through activities that your school can host educate students and parents about the financial aid process. Key information in this section includes activity ideas for students and parents about applying for the Arkansas Challenge scholarship.

IN THIS SECTION

- Implementing Your FAFSA Frenzy Event
- Financial Aid at-a-Glance
- Ideas for Events and Activities
- Promotional Ideas

Implementing Your FAFSA Frenzy Event

Prior-Prior Year FAFSA Legislation

As the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) explains, "Prior-Prior Year (PPY) refers to a policy enabling students and families to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using tax information from two years ago. For example, a high school senior planning to enroll in college in Fall 2023 will file FAFSA using taxes from 2021. PPY debuted in October 2016, for aid applications for the 2017-18 award year. High school class of 2017 was the first high school cohort to use the PPY FAFSA, and all returning college students in that same year were also able to use it." As a result, students are able to file the FAFSA as early as October 1 (instead of January 1) and can use tax information from two years prior – families will no longer need to wait for their prior-year tax information in order to file the FAFSA.

[Financial Aid at a Glance](#)

Pell Grants provide need-based grants to low-income undergraduates. These funds do not need to be repaid by the student unless they withdraw from or stop attending classes within an enrollment period. Grant amounts are dependent on the student's expected family contribution. Filing the FAFSA is the only way to access Pell Grants.

State aid may be available to students who attend a college in their state of residence. Some examples of state aid in Arkansas are the Academic Challenge Scholarship, the Arkansas Future Grant (ArFuture), and the Arkansas Workforce Challenge. State aid typically requires the FAFSA and does not need to be repaid.

Institutional aid may be provided by public and private colleges and universities to help their students pay for tuition and fees. Institutional aid does not need to be repaid, and aid amounts can vary based on many factors such as school selectivity, institutional endowments, and individual need of students. Institutional aid typically requires a filed FAFSA.

Federal Work-Study Programs are offered by colleges to help some students pay for college by working part-time. Students may be employed by: the institution itself; a federal, state, or local public agency; a private nonprofit organization; or a private for-profit organization. Students must file the FAFSA as part of the Federal Work-Study application process and are required to show a certain amount of financial need to be eligible.

Federal Perkins Loans are for undergraduate and graduate students with exceptional financial need (however, not all colleges participate in this program. Check with individual schools if students believe they are eligible). These loans will need to be repaid. Funds for

Perkins Loans are limited, so not everyone who applies will receive this type of aid – the earlier a student files their FAFSA (which is required to receive a Perkins Loan), the more likely they are to receive this type of aid.

Federal Direct Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized) are available to undergraduate and graduate students attending college at least half-time. These loans will need to be repaid. To apply for a Federal Direct Loan, a student will need to file the FAFSA. All students with a valid FAFSA on file are eligible for unsubsidized student loans (within yearly and overall loan limits), no matter their family income.

PLUS Loans are federal loans that parents of dependent undergraduate students can use to help pay their student's education expenses. These credit-based loans require the FAFSA and an application and will need to be repaid.

Scholarships are awarded based on varying criteria and do not need to be repaid. Filling out the FAFSA does not automatically act as a scholarship application, but many scholarships require an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) calculated from the FAFSA in the application.

Ideas for Events and Activities

<u>**Example Activities**</u>

Publicly track progress toward your FAFSA and YOUniversal goals somewhere highly visible in the school. Keep track of your increasing percentages or track your students individually.

- Track your students' FAFSA completion. You can also request that students bring in a copy of their confirmation page to prove that they have completed the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications (you will want them to black out any personal information, such as social security number, before you store it in your office).
- Measure your progress creatively! For example, use a prominent bulletin board and put dollar sign stickers next to each student's name once they complete the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications.
- Use prizes and competition as incentive. Students will encourage each other to complete the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications and provide reminders so that they are more likely to receive the prize.

Create a competition between groups of seniors to complete the highest percentage of FAFSA and YOUniversal applications by a given deadline.

- Provide a prize for the group that has the most completions by the end of October.
- Examples of group prizes are pizza parties, ice cream socials, donuts, etc.

Steps:
1. Determine how to separate out the groups. You can either do a random drawing of names, make groups from a required class, or use homeroom groups. The more evenly balanced the group, the more likely students will feel like they have a chance of winning.
2. Once you have your groups, keep track of who has completed the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications. We recommend using well-placed bulletin boards. List the names of each person in the group and have a way to mark who has completed the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications in each group so students can keep track.
3. Determine how you want students to let you know they have completed the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications. You can have them turn in the confirmation page (make sure they black out their SSN).
4. Announce the groupings to all students and explain the rules, how to win, and what the prize will be (make sure this stays in the announcements too so students remember).
5. Update the bulletin board continually, either daily or weekly so students can see their progress and know who is in the lead. The more exciting it is for them to have completed the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications, the better.
6. Announce the winning group and give the prize at the end of the campaign.

FAFSA and YOUniversal Fridays

Set aside time during the school day each Friday (or another day of your choosing) throughout the campaign to help support students as they fill out the FAFSA and YOUniversal online.

- Reserve a computer lab and call students down in groups by last name or by English class.
- Bring in volunteers to help support your students as they fill out the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications.
    - Financial aid officers at local colleges
    - Parents/PTO members
    - Nonprofit organizations
    - The Student Scholarships and Grants office
    - Teachers and other school staff
    - Have volunteers complete a quick tutorial so they are prepared to help
- Set at least one computer to the FAFSA FAQs page and make sure volunteers know this is available: https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/application-volume/faq
- Advertise these events in your announcements, by making posters, posting on social media, and sending letters home to parents.

Financial Aid Presentations

- It's best to give presentations during the school day. Try coordinating with a teacher to do a presentation during class time. If you cannot find time during the school day, have something right after school.
- Local colleges often are willing to send a financial aid officer to give a presentation to students. If you do not already have a relationship with a local financial aid office, try to contact the local community college or a nearby four year college to see if they are willing to come to your school.
- You can choose to do an overall financial aid presentation, one specific to the FAFSA or YOUniversal, or a mixture of the two. If someone external is coming, make sure to mention what you would like included – they will likely have something already prepared for such presentations.
    - You can also choose to have multiple presentations, focusing on different portions.
- Make sure to advertise this well ahead of time,
    - Provide fliers with other papers being sent home.
    - Post information on your website and in your college related material.
    - Give out flyers at home sports games.
    - Put event info in school announcements and have automated calls sent home.
    - It is important that the message reaches the parents as much as possible because they will in most cases need to be involved in the process.

Parent Information/FAFSA and YOUniversal Night

To remove barriers students sometimes face (work, after-school clubs and sports, babysitting, transportation issues), the majority of your FAFSA and YOUniversal campaign should take place during the school day. However, parent information is essential to completing the FAFSA and YOUniversal, so you might want to engage parents directly as well. Do this in the evening to try and avoid work conflicts.

- Invite local financial aid officers to come in and provide assistance on an evening or weekend.
- Providing as much incentive and convenience as possible for parents is essential for this activity.
  - Consider raffling gas cards or providing food, like pizza, to parents who attend.
  - If at all possible, provide activities for smaller children or day care so the parents can bring their younger children and still be able to focus on the FAFSA and YOUniversal.

Steps for hosting a FAFSA night:
1. Contact financial aid experts from your local community college or university to determine their availability to come to assist with one or multiple FAFSA and YOUniversal nights.
2. After you determine their availability, set a date and get a computer lab for the event.
3. Find other volunteers to assist with sign in, food, and general FAFSA and YOUniversal help.
4. Advertise the event to students and their parents a least a few weeks before the event, with an extra push a few days before the event.
   - Letters home, mass calls home, posters in the hallways, handouts at sporting events, and in person announcements are good options.
5. Order food for the event if you're providing it.
6. Prepare volunteers if they will be assisting with the FAFSA and YOUniversal by having a quick volunteer orientation/meeting or sending out the information ahead of time.
7. Provide handouts a week or so ahead of time to parents and students interested in attending outlining what information they should bring with them. Make sure to update them about PPY.
8. Do a final push of announcements to encourage families to show up.

Promotional Ideas

Treats and Giveaways Ideas

- "If you complete you get a treat!" Students who schedule an appointment to meet with their counselor or career coach and work on the FAFSA and YOUniversal, or bring in their confirmation page from a successfully completed FAFSA and YOUniversal get a candy bar, Skittles, etc.
- Three seniors' names will also be drawn from a raffle on October 31 for a gift card.
- To help students prepare, you can go into each senior English class to present the campaign idea and hand out FAFSA and YOUniversal packets and worksheets outlining all the information students would need in order to complete their FAFSA and YOUniversal.
- "FAFSA is sweet!" FAFSA season coincides with Halloween so use this theme when promoting your events.
    - Use incentives such as **donated** fast food gift cards, gas cards, college apparel, and huge candy bouquets – hence the sweet!
- A local credit union sponsors the events and purchases.

Free giveaways

- Many of these giveaways depend on a budget or donations but you can also give away prizes that do not cost you a penny. Here are some examples:
    - Get out of detention free card
    - Get out of one homework assignment (this might take some coordination with teachers)
    - Front of the lunch line pass
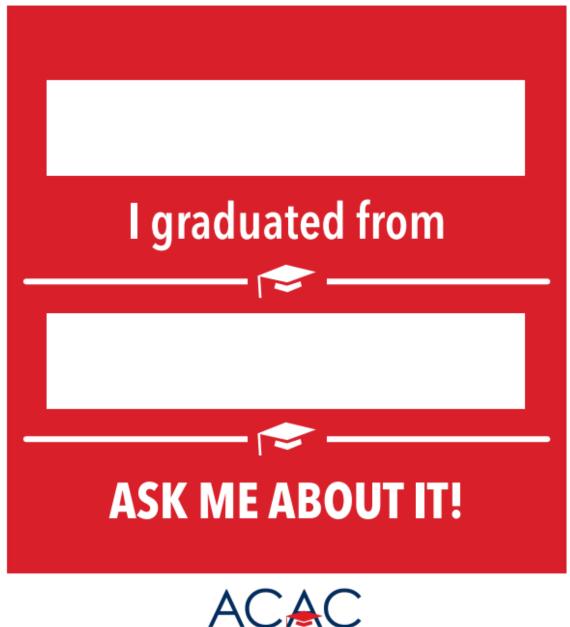   - Tickets into a sporting event or dance

Raffles

- Offer a raffle for prizes for students who complete the FAFSA and YOUniversal by a certain date.
- Prizes can include college t-shirts, gift certificates, college supplies and technology like an e-reader or iPad. One or a few large prizes can be very helpful.
- Advertising the raffle is essential. Make sure students know of resources to complete the FAFSA and YOUniversal applications in time and make sure they are excited about the raffle.

Steps:
1. Start to secure prizes. You should start this as early as possible so you can have a confirmed list of prizes before you start the campaign.
    - Contact college admissions staff, explain the event, and ask if they would be willing to send college gear.

- Contact local businesses to explain your idea and the importance of the FAFSA and YOUniversal to your students. Ask that they donate gift certificates or other prizes to the cause.
- Work with your high school to see if there is funding or donors you could contact about securing a larger prize.
2. Determine an end date for the raffle.
3. Determine how students will notify you of completing the FAFSA and YOUniversal.
   - They can turn in the confirmation page.
4. Advertise the raffle.
   - Make sure students know the types of prizes they could possibly win.
   - Going to classrooms to talk about the raffle, class announcements, flyers or letters sent home are options for advertising.
5. Keep track of who has completed the FAFSA and YOUniversal by the deadline.

If possible, do the drawing in public or announce the winners publicly after the end of the campaign.

ASK ME ABOUT IT!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

I APPLIED!

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HELLO
my name is

**Thank You for Hosting
Arkansas College Campaign Month and
FAFSA Frenzy Activities!**