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COLLEGE Application Week MANUAL

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About the Campaign

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC), an effort of the ACT Center for Equity in Learning, is a national initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The purpose is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits at least one admissions application.

In Indiana, College Application Week is part of the state's annual **College GO!** campaign. College Application Week is supported by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. Learn More Indiana, an initiative of the Commission, facilitates the College GO! campaign and provides materials. For more information about the College GO! campaign or Learn More Indiana, please visit **LearnMoreIndiana.org**.

Indiana's 2023 College Application Week is September 25-29, 2023 (although schools are encouraged to use whatever date(s) works best). At local College Application Week events across the state, high school seniors will complete college applications during the school day. In addition, to encourage students to participate, many colleges across the state waive application fees for Indiana students on College Application Week.

Responsibilities of Participating High Schools

High schools implementing a successful College Application Week event at their school will include the following as part of their initiative:

- **Sign up to be an official host site** at **https://learnmoreindiana.org/college-go-survey/**. Official sites will receive information on fee waivers, videos from colleges, information about live events being hosted by colleges and be included in a list of schools seeking virtual visits from college admissions reps (if desired).
- **Host a program during the school day** that is open to any student interested in applying—with a focus on engaging first-generation students, low-income students and students who may otherwise not apply to college. Some schools may host more than one day, depending on the size of the senior class. Events may be in person, online, or a mix of the two.
- **Choose a contact person** to coordinate the event.
- **Advertise** the event to students and parents. Visit **LearnMoreIndiana.org/classroom-materials** for resources to help you advertise.
- **Ensure students are prepared** to participate in the event (essays are completed prior to the program, students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.). See the **College Research Worksheet** and **College Worksheet** for handouts to provide to students.
- **Collect simple data** and report to Learn More Indiana following the event.

Building Your School Team

A high school's team should consist of at least one school counselor, or another staff member—like an assistant principal or teacher. Ideally, teachers, counselors, other administrators and student leaders will also participate. Don't forget about your school's JAG team or CTE teachers.

The school team should plan for:
- Preparing students in class or out of class. English classes may want to focus on college essays, for example. Students should know about upcoming SAT/ ACT tests and have resources for studying
- Communicating with parents, including sending home a **College Worksheet** (available at **LearnMoreIndiana.org/classroom-materials**)
- Communicating with seniors and their families
- Recruiting volunteers if necessary
- Logistics for the day of the event (computer space, printing handouts for students, Zoom rooms, etc.)
- Following up with students
- Reporting data to Learn More Indiana

Materials & Suggested Event Procedure

Learn More Indiana and the American College Application Campaign have provided materials for schools to use during College Application Week. All materials are available on the Learn More Indiana website (**LearnMoreIndiana.org/classroom-materials**).

The materials can be used in the following way:
- Several weeks prior to the event, send home the **Information Letter for Parents**, the **College Worksheet** and the **College Research Worksheet**. Encourage students to complete the worksheets before attending the event.
- Before the event, encourage students to visit **LearnMoreIndiana.org** to find out which Indiana colleges are waiving their application fees.
- As students arrive at the event, give them the **Student Instructions** handout.
- As students complete applications, instruct them to write down additional items they need to provide to colleges on the **Student Instructions** handout (transcript, SAT or ACT scores, etc.)
- Before students exit, ask them to sign the **Sign-out Sheet.**
- Provide students with the **Next Steps Sheet** before they leave, or distribute it a week or two after the event to keep the application momentum going.
- *Note: many of the above materials are editable – either as a Word Doc or as a fillable PDF – making these resources good for in person and online use.*

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Recruiting Volunteer and Volunteer Tasks

A school should consider engaging outside stakeholders to maximize the impact of the event, whether your event is in-person, online, or a mix of the two, volunteers can help it run more smoothly. Community partners can advertise the event, volunteer, provide in-kind donations, speak to students, etc. Potential community partners include:

- Admissions representatives from local colleges (two-year and four-year)
- Local business leaders
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Faith-based community
- Non-profit organizations such as the YMCA, 4H, Boys and Girls Club, etc.
- PTA and other parents/family members who want to be engaged in the process
- Student leaders in your high school
- High school alumni
- Retired school personnel
- Local government officials or elected representatives

We know that schools may be limited in inviting visitors to attend events in person. Consider reaching out to ask volunteers to assist virtually. **Schools that sign up to be an official host site will have the option to be listed in a document that will be sent to college admissions teams.** Members of college admissions teams may reach out to you about setting up a virtual recruitment visit, either during College Application Week or at another time. **Being included on this list will be optional, but only schools that sign up as host site events can be included.**

Although familiarity with the college application process is a plus, it is not required for someone to fulfill a useful task and have a meaningful volunteer experience at a participating high school. Here are a few tasks that volunteers (or school team members) could contribute to the initiative at a high school:

- Greet students as they arrive. Ensure that they have a completed **College Worksheet**.
- Help students find **LearnMoreIndiana.org/indiana-college-map** and begin an application by going to the college's website. If the school doesn't have enough computers or stable internet, consider printing paper applications.
- Guide students through the college application process and help answer any questions they may have, regardless of where they want to apply.
- Monitor printers to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed. Encourage students who are participating virtually to print documents or save them in a folder on their desktop.
- Hand out materials to students after they complete their college application(s).
- Assist students in listing the items they still need to provide, such as a high school transcript, recommendation letters, SAT or ACT scores, etc.
- Congratulate each student on applying to college!
- Help students navigate to **fsaid.ed.gov** to create their FSA ID, which they'll need to submit their FAFSA.

During the Event

The main part of your College Application Week event will be getting seniors to apply to at least one college. However, there are other ways you can participate in College Application Week to celebrate your seniors and help ensure they are ready for college success. Ideas include:

- o Wear college gear to show your college spirit!
- o Encouraging your senior 21st Century Scholars to complete as many of their remaining **Scholar Success Program** activities as they can. Applying to college is one of their activities, so have them log their progress in **ScholarTrack** at the end of your College Application Week event.
- o Celebrate your seniors. Ask local restaurants and businesses if they are willing to donate food or other raffle items for your event.
- o Consider setting up a photo area where your seniors can take celebratory selfies. Use the photo sheets in your College Application Week kit, or print more at **LearnMoreIndiana.org/educators/classroom-materials**.
- o Encourage students to use the virtual Zoom backgrounds provided by many of Indiana's colleges / universities available at: **LearnMoreIndiana.org/educators/classroom-materials**.
- o Show students the videos many of Indiana's colleges and universities created for them at **LearnMoreIndiana.org/educators/classroom-materials**.
- o Provide students to attend a few of the live, virtual events being hosted by Indiana's colleges and universities during the month of September. A list of events is available at **LearnMoreIndiana.org/educators/classroom-materials**.
- o Connect with us and tag us in your social media posts about your event.
  - o Facebook: **Facebook.com/LearnMoreIN**
  - o Instagram: **@LearnMoreIndiana**
  - o Twitter: **Twitter.com/LearnMoreIN**
- o Consider engaging your 9th, 10th, or 11th graders in your efforts as well. College Application Week is a great time to start thinking about researching colleges, making college visits, and starting to prepare for college applications.

After the Event

After your College Application Week event has ended, be sure to follow up with students to make sure they've finalized their application (if necessary). The FAFSA opens on October 1— shortly after College Application Day—so immediately following the event is a great time to start reaching out to students about the FAFSA.

Don't forget to submit data to Learn More Indiana. After your event, compile data from the **Sign-out Sheet** and report it to Learn More Indiana via the **Data Reporting Sheet** or **SurveyGizmo Participation Survey** (**https://learnmoreindiana.org/college-go-survey/**).

Additional Support

Thank you for participating in Indiana's College Application Week. In Indiana, this initiative of the American College Application Campaign is facilitated and supported by Learn More Indiana. Additional support is available by contacting Kayla Walke, content marketing specialist for Learn More Indiana, at **mwalke@che.in.gov**.

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