



HOST SITE RECRUITMENT MANUAL



Funding and support for this guide was provided by:

ACT
American Council on Education
Bank of America Charitable
Foundation
College Board
Hearst Foundation
Lumina Foundation

KPMG Foundation
The Bill and Melinda Gates
Foundation
The Education Trust
The Kresge Foundation
Strada Education Network
(formerly USA Funds)

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

Welcome to the American College Application Campaign

The American Council on Education is pleased to provide a home to the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a national effort to increase college access through dissemination of ideas, development of practices, and technical assistance for implementation of a College Application event.

The ACAC initiative began in 2005, in a single GEAR UP North Carolina high school in Chatham County. Since that time, the initiative has expanded statewide in North Carolina with every district and over 470 high schools participating annually. Shortly after, the number of states implementing a College Application event began to grow. Beginning in 2014, ACAC took place in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This past fall an estimated 6,000 schools hosted programs. This manual highlights the most effective practices of participating states for host site recruitment.

In 2016, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) made a significant change by moving the date it is available from January 1 to October 1. This early release is beneficial for students as it allows them to learn their federal aid eligibility earlier, giving them more time to research and apply to colleges before admissions deadlines. This also allowed many of the ACAC states to better align their College Application Campaigns with FAFSA completion efforts. ACAC encourages states to continue bringing college application and FAFSA completion efforts together to better support students.

Campaign Resources for your State

This recruitment manual gives an overview of the recruitment resources available for implementing a College Application Campaign. This manual is intended for the designated ACAC State Coordinator, to assist you in recruiting participating high schools for the state's College Application Campaign. Whether your state is in its pilot year or has hosted the campaign for 10 years, this manual will help states recruit and expand college application campaign efforts. All materials are available on ACAC's website, www.acenet.edu/acac, under Resources.

A national ACAC Dropbox© is also available to all State Coordinators. This is a resource used to share national templates and documents states create for their Campaigns. If you do not currently have access to the Dropbox, please contact one of our staff members below.

Questions or need additional support? Contact the American College Application Campaign to discuss your state's goals, resources and technical assistance available from our team, and next steps to implement a successful College Application Campaign.

Melissa Caperton:	mcaperton@acenet.edu	919-602-3635 (direct)
Lisa King:	liking@acenet.edu	989-274-1872 (direct)
Joni Petschauer:	jpetschauer@acenet.edu	252-241-5593 (direct)

Want to stay connected with and informed about the American College Application Campaign? Subscribe to our newsletter at www.acenet.edu/acac, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/american_cac and like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/americanacac.

Host Site Recruitment Resource Overview

Joining ACAC/State Responsibilities One-Pager

This one-pager reviews the goal of the national campaign and expectations of states.

Implementation Overview One-Pager

This one-pager reviews the roles and responsibilities of the state coordinator and site coordinators.

Implementation Timeline

This timeline guides you from the early stages of recruitment through your campaign events. Timeline can be adjusted to meet your state needs.

Recruitment Timeline and Best Practices

Utilize this timeline to develop and implement recruitment of host sites in your state.

Inviting Schools Overview

Guidelines on how to target potential new school and how to communicate with them.

Sample Invitation Letter

A template letter to revise and distribute to target high schools.

Sample Interest Form

This interest form can be used in early recruitment and promotional opportunities to gather contact information of interested high schools. The purpose of this form is much like a Letter of Intent before applying for a grant.

Sample Host Site Registration Form

This form is intended as an official registration form for high schools to commit as host sites. Questions can be revised to fit the data requests of each state.

High School Training Materials and Sample Agenda

An outline of available host site materials to use when implementing Campaign-related events and a sample agenda for training host sites.

Joining the American College Application Campaign

About the Campaign

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC), an effort of the American Council on Education (ACE), 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.

The Campaign is conducted state by state and is typically held annually in the fall. There are variations to the scheduled week or month in order to accommodate state-specific needs. After submitting the admissions application in the fall, students are encouraged to register for their FSA ID and are provided with the date of their state's FAFSA Day or College Goal event to ensure they apply for financial aid as part of the college admissions process.

In 2016, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) made a significant change by moving the date it is available from January 1 to October 1. This early release is beneficial for students as it allows them to learn their federal aid eligibility earlier, giving them more time to research and apply to colleges before admissions deadlines. This also allowed many of the ACAC states to better align their College Application Campaigns with FAFSA completion efforts. ACAC encourages states to continue bringing college application and FAFSA completion efforts together to better support students.

State Responsibilities

Year 1: The initial effort of a state joining the American College Application Campaign is a pilot implementation of a College Application event held in the fall. Successful implementation of the project will include the following steps at the state/territorial level:

- Identify the State Coordinator and lead implementation agency
- Identify and convene a steering committee comprised of education stakeholders
- Attain the Governor's buy-in
- Target/recruit participating high schools with a focus on low-income and first-generation student populations
- Provide resources and guidance to participating high schools

Year 2 and Beyond: After an initial pilot program, states should plan to implement an annual College Application event each fall with gradual scaling up that leads to a statewide annual program. Lessons learned during the pilot initiative can be used to improve the program as it is scaled. Successful expansion of the campaign will include the following steps at the state level:

- Consistent lead implementation agency
- Steering committee members taking leadership in specific campaign tasks
- City and County-level buy-in from elected officials
- Establish goals to increase high school participation year to year
- Establish goals to keep high schools coming back year to year
- Provide resources and guidance to participating high schools

Implementing a College Application Campaign Program: Overview

State Coordinator – Role and Responsibilities

Each participating state should identify a lead agency and person to act as coordinator for the state’s College Application Campaign event. The type of coordinating agency has varied greatly across participating ACAC states and includes leadership from K-12, higher education, state financial aid authorities, and college access initiatives or programs. Though the lead agency and State Coordinator will be responsible for planning and implementing the program, it should be done in collaboration with a multitude of stakeholders in the state as outlined in the Steering Committee section below. Therefore, one of the key responsibilities of the State Coordinator will be identifying and convening a steering committee representative of the stakeholders. Steering committee resources are available on the national ACAC Dropbox©

Host Site Coordinator - Program Implementation at the School-Level

Each high school will identify a site coordinator who will be responsible for implementing the program at their school. This can be a high school counselor, a college advisor, assistant principal, or a teacher who works in the building on a regular basis and is known by the students and staff. ACAC has provided tools and resources that the state and/or participating high schools can customize to your state’s program. Encourage host sites to share resources and ideas. ACAC is constantly amazed by the amount of creativity we see from our host sites.

Planning and Communicating the Campaign Program

Whether your state is implementing a pilot event or a statewide initiative, it is important to communicate the opportunity to high schools in your state. A *Site Coordinator Manual* is available on the ACAC website for high schools implementing the program. **The *Site Coordinator Manual* should be reviewed and edited by the State Coordinator prior to distribution to participating high schools to ensure it reflects your state’s implementation.** To assist with the review and customization, ACAC has provided a number of templates and examples from participating states and their host sites. These documents are available on the ACAC website www.acenet.edu/acac under Resources. Many states have found it helpful to provide the larger manual and break it into topic or time-specific documents that can be quickly and easily utilized by participating schools.

Although your state’s program will not be implemented until the fall, it is important to begin planning for the program early in the calendar year. A **timeline** to guide the State and Site Coordinators in planning a College Application Campaign event is provided in this manual.

Technical Assistance

The ACAC team is available to provide technical assistance to your state as you convene your state’s College Application event steering committee, train your pilot high school site coordinators, and work through the various logistics necessary to implement a successful program.

Education Landscape

As you plan for expansion of your college application campaign, it is important to understand the education landscape in your state. How many high schools are in the state, what data is available on the student populations served by those schools, what are other college access initiatives in the state that you can collaborate with, and what professional development opportunities can be leveraged to help spread the word about your Campaign? Use the ACAC Resource Audit Manual to summarize the education landscape in your state.

Timeline: Implementing a College Application Campaign Program

Although your state's College Application Campaign program won't be implemented until the fall, it is important that your state begin planning for the program *early*, ideally no later than the spring prior to the event. Below, you will find a recommended timeline for your state's initial pilot of a College Application Campaign program. The timeline may need to be shifted based on the dates selected for your state's Campaign program and other nuances of your state's initiative. Most of these tasks will need to be implemented annually as your College Application Campaign program is scaled.

State Coordinator – Campaign Event Timeline

January - March Prior to Campaign Event

- Review your state's College Application Campaign steering committee members and determine if additional representatives need to be included.
- Invite steering committee members to attend the scheduled meeting(s).
- Host steering committee meeting.

April - May Prior to Campaign Event

- Follow-up on to-do items from steering committee meeting – ensure communication plan is implemented and includes notifying postsecondary institutions of the upcoming event.
- Review ACAC Site Coordinator Manual and draft a customized version for your state using the available templates. To make materials more user-friendly for high schools, you may want to provide the materials in activity or time-specific individual documents.
- Reach out to target schools prior to the close of the school year to invite them to participate in your fall Campaign event.
- Post materials to your state's Campaign's website, email materials to participating schools, and/or mail materials to participating schools.

June - July Prior to Campaign Event

- Host second steering committee meeting to discuss recruitment of schools, materials and resources for schools, volunteer recruitment, and other pressing issues.

August Prior to Campaign Event

- Begin the process to obtain Governor's Proclamation (see suggestions in the State Coordinator Manual).
- Finalize your state's ACAC materials. Ensure all items include your state's branding.
- Identify the data variables that you want collected during your program and the tools and sources (surveys, web-portal, etc.) from which you will collect the data.
- Create a social media plan of action and start to promote the Campaign (see suggestions in the Social Media Manual).

September – October Prior to Campaign Event

- At the start of the school year follow-up with high schools that have committed to participate in the event to confirm participation and provide materials as needed.
- **Conduct training for high school site coordinators; early preparation of schools and students is key!** ACAC has developed a training PowerPoint that you may customize to your state's program available in the national Dropbox and the ACAC website.

- Conduct trainings for volunteers. ACAC has developed a training PowerPoint that you may customize to your state's program, available in the national Dropbox and the ACAC website.
- Begin press outreach. Consider drafting op-eds and/or press releases.
- Create a map to visualize the number of committed host sites.
- Participate and encourage Campaign high schools and partner organizations to participate in national #WhyApply day on September 22.

Week Prior to Campaign Event

- Follow-up with participating schools to confirm participation, answer any questions they have regarding implementation, and remind them of data collection requirements. Provide schools with the phone number and email they can use if they have issues during the program.
- Remind high schools of the social media hashtags that will be used during your state's campaign.

During your Campaign Event

- You did it! Go out and volunteer during at least one event! The best way to learn about an ACAC program is to experience it yourself. Be sure to have an identified point of contact who participating schools can reach in your absence.
- Encourage staff and students to participate in social media to share their experiences!
- Survey students, volunteers, and site coordinators about their experiences.

Within Month Following Campaign Event

- Convene your Steering Committee to discuss the strengths and areas of improvement for your Campaign event.
- Follow up with host sites for data collection and feedback.

A complete College Application Campaign timeline is available in the State Coordinator Implementation Resources subfolder on the national ACAC Dropbox®.

Host Site Recruitment – Timeline and Best Practices

ACAC recommends states recruit host sites in the spring of each year. Though the Campaign won't be implemented until the fall, it is important to secure participating high schools at least four months in advance. This is to ensure host sites have enough time to receive training and begin implementation. Many host site and state coordinators have expressed over the years that starting the host site planning process in September feels too late.

Below, you will find a recommended recruitment timeline for outreach, confirmation and training of host sites. The timeline may need to shift based on the dates selected for your state's Campaign program and other nuances of your state's initiative. Additionally, these recommended steps should be a shared responsibility of the steering committee. Find champions from the committee to take ownership of a task or process.

March

- Create a host site sign up form and establish timeline to commit. *See sign-up template provided in this manual.*
- Look for presentation opportunities at school counselor association conferences, superintendent association conferences, college admissions conferences, and state college access network conferences. *Note: This is a step that may need to happen year round depending on when the conferences typically occur.*
- Ask partner organizations and agencies for newsletter or blog opportunities to promote the Campaign and need for host sites.
- Draft social media copy to promote upcoming sign-up process.
- Establish a goal of the number of host sites the state hopes to reach this year.
- Create a target list of schools to approach – this list should include past host sites and potential new sites.

April

- Launch an official Call for Host Sites; ensure the sign up form is readily available on state campaign website.
- Reach out to target schools and invite them to participate in your fall Campaign event.
 - Draft and mail a letter to superintendents, principals, and counselors of potential new schools on your target list.
- Host an information webinar and/or in-person meeting about the campaign and host site expectations.
- Continue to look for presentation, newsletter and/or blog opportunities to promote the Campaign and call for host sites.
- Share call for host sites on social media; ask steering committee members to share on their social media channels.

May/June

- Review ACAC Site Coordinator Manual and draft a customized version for your state using the available templates. To make materials more user-friendly for high schools, you may want to provide the materials in activity or time-specific individual documents.
- Notify selected schools; share any important dates and reminders like training, deadlines to order give-a-ways, deadlines to submit plans, etc.
- Post materials to your state's Campaign website, email materials to participating schools, and/or mail materials to participating schools.

Inviting Schools to your College Application Campaign

Schools to Target

The goal of the American College Application Campaign is to increase the number of first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students who pursue a postsecondary education. As such, schools that serve low-income communities (as defined by the free-and-reduced lunch rate at the school) should be targeted for participation in your Campaign.

As the program grows annually, additional high-need schools should be targeted for participation. However, it is important to note that, regardless of a school's free-and-reduced lunch rate, there are students at all high schools who are first-generation, or who may not have plans to apply to college. The Campaign event is designed to assist those students at all schools.

In addition to targeting schools based on their free-and-reduced lunch rate, consider targeting schools with pre-college programs. These programs tend to serve high-need schools and high-need students. Many states have had success recruiting high schools with established college advising corps, GEAR UP, TRiO, or an AmeriCorps program. Often, these high schools quickly thrive as ACAC host sites because they have an established relationship with schools and students to successfully implement and grow the initiative.

Communication

Once the target schools are identified, communicating the opportunity in a clear, concise, and informative manner is essential to gaining the buy-in of school and district leaders. Superintendents, as well as, principals and school counselors at target high schools should be notified of the program, what is involved in joining the Campaign, and how they can confirm their participation.

Think carefully about what agency should send the invitation to participate. Certainly, more than one agency can send the invitation, but all efforts should be coordinated and seamless so as to not overwhelm and confuse targeted schools with too much information.

A sample invitation letter and recruitment form are included in this manual. Both include the type of information a State Coordinator would likely want to know from high schools interested in participating. As always, these resources should be modified to align with your state's program.

What Participating Schools Need to Know

As outlined in the letter below there are a few key items that schools will likely want to know prior to joining the Campaign:

- What is the College Application Campaign?
- What is the benefit to my school and students? Why should my school join?
- What does joining the Campaign involve?
- Will there be training?
- Is there a cost associated with joining the Campaign?
- How much of my time and school staff time will be required to join the Campaign?
- Who does my school contact with questions about the Campaign?

Sample Invitation Letter

Dear [Superintendent/Principal/School Counselor Name],

As part of a national initiative sponsored by the American Council on Education, [state name] has joined the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) and will host [State's Campaign name] on [dates]. The goal of ACAC and [State's Campaign name] is to increase the number of first-generation students and students from low-income families who pursue a postsecondary education by assisting high school seniors as they navigate the college admissions process, ensuring each participating student submits at least one admissions application. As we know, if [state name] is to develop the educated workforce needed for progressive economic development, we need to significantly increase the number of first generation students and students from low-income families pursuing and completing a certificate program, associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree.

We are seeking schools interested in participating in [State's Campaign name]. We believe that this initiative will complement the work your school community is already doing to increase awareness of college preparedness and the application process. As a result of your schools' participation in this program, we anticipate that your school will experience an increased number of students submitting college applications.

If your school commits to hosting a [State's Campaign name] event, a Site Coordinator will need to be identified for your school, typically a school counselor, college advisor, teacher or assistant principal. Your school will be asked to coordinate and dedicate time during the regular school day on a day or days during [State's Campaign name] to assist seniors as they complete a college application.

[State's Campaign name] will provide training to your school's Site Coordinator regarding how to implement the program including organization, planning, use of volunteers, encouraging student participation, and securing application fee waivers for low-income students. Training will be available [dates] through [in-person, webinar, conference call]. Details regarding training will be sent to registered high schools at a later date. In addition, your school can indicate whether you would like [State's Campaign name] to assist in identifying volunteers to help support your local initiative. [State's Campaign name] is available to provide technical assistance as your Site Coordinator plans and implements the Campaign locally. And, finally, a guidebook/toolkit of resources including sample letters, schedules, and checklists will be provided to your school. There is no cost to your school to join the Campaign. We anticipate this event will be held at least one day during [State's Campaign name]. Other than those commitments, the planning of [State's Campaign name] at your school can be as big or little as you want to make it – although we encourage you to assist students in advance of the program to ensure they are prepared! So, additional time dedicated to the program will vary by school.

Please let us know if you are interested in joining the Campaign no later than [date] by completing the registration form (link or enclosed) [*provide a link or include the form in your invitation*].

We hope that your school will join this exciting initiative! Should you have any questions about [State's Campaign name], please do not hesitate to contact [State Coordinator's Name], [State's Campaign title], at [email address] or by phone at [phone number].

Sample Interest Form

The following questions can be built into an online interest form via Google Form, Survey Monkey, etc. This interest form can be used in early recruitment and promotional opportunities to gather contact information of interested high schools. The purpose of this form is much like a Letter of Intent before applying for a grant.

Thank you for your interest in joining [State's Campaign name]. We look forward to working with your school as we implement this exciting initiative together. Please complete the form below to indicate your school's interest in joining [State's Campaign name]. [State Coordinator's Name], [State's Campaign name] Coordinator, will follow up with you with more details about Campaign requirements and how to register your school for official participation in the program.

High School Name:

School District:

Number of Seniors at your high school:

Date(s) that you anticipate implementing [State's Campaign name]. As a reminder, [State's Campaign name], will be held [dates]:

Site Coordinator for High School (typically a school counselor or assistant principal):

Site Coordinator's title:

Site Coordinator's email address:

Site Coordinator's phone number:

Site Coordinator's mailing address:

If our school becomes an official site, we understand we must:

1. Identify a Site Coordinator.
2. Host a college application program during the school day.
3. Submit the number of participating seniors and the number of applications submitted to (_State Coordinator's Name) after the event.

Sample Host Site Registration Form

The following questions can be built into an online sign up form via Google Form, Survey Monkey, etc. This form is intended as an official registration form for high schools to commit as host sites. Questions can be revised to fit the data requests of each state.

Thank you for your interest in joining [State's Campaign name]. By completing this form, you are registering your high school as a [STATE CAMPAIGN NAME] official site. Host sites are required to set aside designated space and time during the school day for graduating seniors to complete college applications. Host sites are expected to provide technology to complete applications online. Host sites are expected to encourage students to research different colleges and universities in order to find the best match and fit for them prior to [STATE CAMPAIGN NAME].

Please complete this form by [DATE].

Q1. High school name: (required):

Q2. Host site coordinator name (required):

Q3. Host site coordinator title (required):

Q4. Host site coordinator email (required):

Q5. Host site coordinator phone number (required):

Q6. School mailing address:

Q7. City:

Q8. Zip:

Q9. Number of years participating in [STATE CAMPAIGN NAME]:

[State Coordinators – consider using the following questions if there is a limit on how many high schools can participate or if you need these data for your state reports to funders]

Please provide the following data to the best of your ability. [If applicable, provide links to where data can be found]

Q10. Anticipated size of senior class 2018:

Q11. Expected 2017 graduation rate:

Q12. Average Free and Reduced Lunch Rate – School Building (as a percentage):

Q13. College Enrollment Rate (percentage) – Class of 2016:

Q14. I understand as a host site we will need to provide a location with computer and internet access during school hours.

- Yes
- No

Q15. I understand if I am unable to provide a location with computer and internet access that it is my responsibility to print paper applications made available online.

- Yes
- No

Q17. *[Option A]* I understand I will be required to recruit enough volunteers to assist with students during the designated application times.

- Yes
- No

Q17. *[Option B]* I am in need of assistance in recruiting volunteers to assist with students during the designated application times.

- Yes
- No

Q18. I understand I will need to track and share specific aggregate data about the number of participating students and the number of applications submitted during our event with [STATE CAMPAIGN AGENCY] by [DATE].

- Yes
- No

High School Training: Materials and Sample Agenda

Materials

ACAC has compiled some of the most effective materials on our website (www.acenet.edu/acac) under the Resources tab in the Site Coordinator Manual. **Please review the Site Coordinator Manual and edit it to include the materials that would be beneficial to your state's program, ensuring they are customized as necessary to reflect your state's implementation.**

Customizable ACAC materials in the *Site Coordinator Manual* include:

- Site Coordinator Checklist and Timeline
- College Application Worksheet for Students
- "Ask Me!" buttons and signs
- Student, Family, and Community Information Letters
- Volunteer Task Assignments
- Student Instructions on Day of College Application Event
- College Application Event Sign-Out Sheet
- I Applied! stickers
- Next Steps handout
- Volunteer Thank You Letters
- Sample Press Releases
- Reminders for FAFSA Day or College Goal event

Training Agenda Template

It is highly recommended state coordinators provide a training for all host sites, even those returning. It is up to each state, based on the number of host sites and geography of the state, on how this training is provided. Some states provide an in-person training while others offer a series of webinars. A recommended training best practice is to engage returning sites to help by sharing best practices and examples of how their high school utilized the tools available.

A training PowerPoint template is available in the national ACAC Dropbox© that states can customize to their program and use beginning in Year 2 of implementation. Please contact our office for assistance.

- I. Welcome and Thank You!
 - Have all host sites briefly introduce themselves. This helps the schools identify neighboring districts that may be able to coordinate efforts.

- II. Purpose of American College Application Campaign and [insert state campaign]
 - To encourage and assist all students to apply to college, especially those who are from low-income and first generation college families, because applying to college will increase their options as they decide what to do after high school.
 - To provide additional information to students about the college-going process.
 - To reinforce a college-going culture in the school and community.
 - This is not a recruitment activity for a specific college or university.
 - [insert additional state goals]

III. Host Site Coordinator Requirements

- Host sites must identify a site coordinator who will be responsible for implementing the program at their school. This can be a high school counselor, a college advisor, assistant principal, or a teacher who works in the building on a regular basis and is known by the students and staff.

IV. Preparing for a College Application event

- College Application Campaign events will be held at the school during normal school hours
- Expectations before, during and after event
- Data collection process – what data is required, how to collect, and how and when to submit to the state coordinator

V. Review Site Coordinator Manual and Available Resources

- Site Coordinator Manual
- Resources Manual
- Demonstrate how to access and download from state campaign website

VI. Questions?

VII. Thank you!