



Delaware
COLLEGE
Application Month

**Partner of the
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SITE COORDINATOR MANUAL

**Delaware College Application Month
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College Application Week Resources for Your High School

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Responsibilities of Participating High Schools

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

- Hosting a program during the school day that is open to any student interested in applying with a focus on engaging first-generation students, students from low-income families, and students who may not otherwise apply to college. Your state's initiative may be a week or longer, but most schools host events on only one or two days, depending on the size of the senior class.
- Identifying and convening a school team comprising staff and community members.
- Leveraging support of the school team to ensure that students are prepared to participate in the event (e.g., essays are completed prior to the program, students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.).
- Engaging the local community, families, and others through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising the program.
- Creating a college-going culture within the school through a variety of approaches.
- Following-up with students after the event to ensure applications submitted are complete (transcripts, college entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, submitting a complete FAFSA, etc.).

Identifying Stakeholders and Convening a School Team

Schools that have successfully implemented a College Application Week event have done so through the collaboration of multiple stakeholders. A key approach to engaging stakeholders is the creation of a school team that will provide input on and support for the various logistics necessary to implement a successful College Application Week event at the school level. Below, you will find a **list of recommended community partners** you can use to identify the key stakeholders in your community. Keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive and you should engage any other community partners that have a vested interest in college access and success. When planning and implementing your school's College Application Week initiative, you should follow all district and school policies regarding non-school personnel visiting, volunteering, or otherwise assisting with your school's program.

Potential community partners include:

- Admissions representatives from local colleges (two-year and four-year).
- Local business leaders.
- Local Chamber of Commerce.
- College access initiatives (federally funded, state-funded, or community-based).
- Faith-based community partners.
- Nonprofit 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.
- Retired school personnel.
- Local government officials or elected representatives.

School Team: Agenda Items for Your Convening

As outlined above, a school team comprising a variety of stakeholders is extremely effective in creating support and buy-in for your school's College Application Week event. There are a variety of topics that can and should be discussed with your school team.

Some of the key topics the school team should discuss are:

- What is the College Application Week event?
- Outlining the role of school team.
- Developing a communication strategy: student, parents, school staff, and community.
- Ensuring students are prepared well before the event (researching schools, learning how to pay for the application, understanding additional admission requirements).
- Creating or enhancing a college-going culture that is visible in the school in the weeks leading up to the event.
- Encouraging and recruiting students to participate in the initiative.
- Including underclassmen in the effort.
- Engaging volunteers (ideas are provided by Delaware College Application Month at www.DelawareGoesToCollege.org).
- Ensuring a process for evaluation and data collection.
- Following-up with applications to ensure the college and financial aid processes are completed.

After your College Application Week, your school team should meet to debrief on the successes and challenges of the current year's initiative. Feel free to use the topics above to guide the discussion. The debrief meeting should occur as soon after the conclusion of your school's College Application Week as possible. By quickly assessing what worked and what areas need improvement, your school team can get a jump-start on planning for next year's program and create an action plan to follow-up with participating students who need to complete their college applications and begin the financial aid application process.

Timeline: Implementing a College Application Week Program

Although your school's College Application Week program won't be implemented until the fall, it is important that your school begin planning for the program *early*, ideally no later than the start of the school year. Online, you can find a recommended timeline for your school's College Application Week program. The timeline may need to be shifted based on the dates selected for Delaware College Application Month program and other nuances of the state's initiative.

Preparing and Implementing a College Application Week

There are a variety of activities that high school site coordinators can do prior to, during, and after the school's College Application Week event to ensure it is successful and meaningful for participating students. Samples of these activities can be found online. There is also a **Site Coordinator Checklist** on page 5 of this document to assist you with tracking the implementation of each activity.

Pre-Event Activities: Creating a College-Going Culture and Preparing Students

There are several activities that schools participating in the College Application Week program can do prior to the event to prepare students and generate enthusiasm and support for the program. **Online at DelawareGoestoCollege.org there are samples of pre-event activities that high school site coordinators can utilize as they plan for the program.** Two especially useful samples in the online document are the *College Research Worksheet* and the *College Application Worksheet*. The Delaware College Application Month Planning Team will print and mail postcards to your school's seniors and will print and deliver "I Applied" stickers for your school's use during your College Application Week event.

During Your College Application Week Program

You have completed all of the planning for your College Application Week program and due to the pre-event activities, your students are prepared and the community is engaged in this exciting initiative. **Activities and resources can be found in the online document titled Site Coordinator Samples to help make your event a success!**

After Your College Application Week Program

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

As we all know, the journey to successfully enrolling in postsecondary education does not end with the submission of a college application. There are several more steps that each participating student will need to complete over the next few months including, but not limited to, submitting college admissions test scores, transcripts (current and final), recommendation letters, and a FAFSA. As such, it is important that your team implements a plan to follow-up with participating students.

References can be found in the Site Coordinator Samples Document at <http://delawaregoestocollege.org/college-application-month/>

Site Coordinator Checklist

Use the checklist below to assist you as you implement your College Application Week.

Examples are in the online Site Coordinator Samples document.



Pre-Event Preparation: First Steps

- Print and review Site Coordinator Samples document found on the Delaware Goes to College Website.
- Identify and reserve computer labs for your school's College Application Week.
- Add College Application Week to school calendar.
- Identify a school team and host meetings to build support and assist with tasks; use the Resources Audit.

Communicate Opportunity to Students, Families, and the Local Community

- Send information letters.
- Communicate through school website, newsletter, marquee, and phone blasts.
- Send a pre-event press release.

Prepare Students for Your College Application Week

- Focus on activities that encourage students to research and identify schools that are their best fit. Use College Board's Big Future website and the College Research Worksheet.
- Sponsor or support participation in college fairs or college visits.
- Distribute College Application Worksheet (pages 6-8 of the Site Coordinator Samples document).
- Identify and meet with students eligible for application fee waivers.

Implement School-Wide Activities to Build Awareness and Enthusiasm

- Hold college t-shirt/sweatshirt days.
- Create college bulletin boards.
- Post "Ask Me!" signs on offices and classroom doors. Run door-decorating contests.
- Incorporate your College Application Week in morning announcements.
- Invite guest speakers.
- Hold family/student nights.
- Engage underclassmen in school's College Application Week.

Get Volunteers Involved to Assist with Your College Application Week

- Communicate with volunteers about basic logistical details of your event using the roster provided by the Delaware CAM Planning Team.
- Assign tasks (page 20 of the Site Coordinator Samples document).
- Ensure volunteers have nametags and "Ask Me!" stickers.

Hold College Application Event!

- Ensure students receive a "10 Steps" document (page 22 of the Site Coordinator Samples document).
- Ensure students receive "What's Next" handout (page 25 of the Site Coordinator Samples document).
- Ensure students register for the FSA ID
- Ensure students sign-out
- Hand out "I Applied" stickers to students when they submit a college application.
- Be active on social media! Encourage students to post using #IApplied

Post-Event Follow-Up

- Write thank-you letters to volunteers.
- Host post-event debrief with school team.
- Complete Site Coordinator Survey.
- Follow-up with students to ensure they complete the college admissions *and* financial aid application processes. Help them navigate award letters.
- Ensure students continue to work on the FAFSA.
- Host a College Signing Day celebration.