

Volunteer Handbook

Delaware College Application Month 2017

The power of the volunteer comes from students seeing that members of the broader community view education as an important goal.



Dear College Application Month Volunteer,

On behalf of the Delaware College Application Month Planning Team, we want to thank you for volunteering your time and enthusiasm for Delaware College Application Month (CAM)!

CAM is a national effort of the American Council on Education (ACE) with the goal of providing every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college. CAM is a partnership among the Delaware Department of Education, Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware, and the state's district and charter high schools with support from the region's colleges and universities.

While CAM is focused on low-income, first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, we encourage schools to include activities for all students, from freshmen to seniors. The involvement of volunteers in CAM helps schools build a college-going culture in their communities.

Delaware CAM – Success and Expansion

Delaware CAM, now in its sixth year, began as a pilot program in 2012 with two participating schools—Lake Forest and Smyrna High Schools. In 2014, 38 public and charter schools from across the state participated, and in those schools, approximately 4,904 students applied to college. Responding to the success of the program, CAM will continue to assist all district and charter high schools in Delaware, and activities are scheduled from October 16–November 17. Within the month, each school selects a week (usually 2–5 days) to hold its College Application Week (CAW) events, providing high school seniors the time and opportunity to fill out applications during school hours—away from the stress of part-time jobs and extracurricular activities.

Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to the success of CAM. According to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), “Exit surveys of similar events have shown, overwhelmingly, that students considered the event a major factor in their decision to apply to college. Volunteers are crucial to providing one-on-one support that will have a positive impact on students.” Volunteering during a school's College Application Week (CAW) is a great way to support students in advancing their future.

How Can Volunteers Help?

You do not need to be an expert on the college application process to make a significant contribution during CAM; you just need to have a desire to assist and encourage students as they take this first and important step toward continuing their education beyond high school. Depending on the assigned school's needs, volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, and serve as extra hands for counselors and teachers during the event.

Is Training Available?

Yes! Prior to volunteering, you will be asked to review this Volunteer Handbook, a school-specific Volunteer Reference Guide, and an online Volunteer Training Webinar that will take approximately 20 minutes and answer any questions you have about volunteering during CAM. You can access these documents at DelawareGoesToCollege.org under the College Application Month tab and clicking on “Volunteers.”

CAM is possible due to the collaborative efforts of the administration, faculty, and staff at Delaware high schools as well as our students, their families, and volunteers like you from across the community. We appreciate your commitment to making college a reality for our students. Please use this handbook to familiarize yourself with information about CAM, why applying to college is so important, and how you can help as a volunteer.

If you have any questions about CAM, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you have questions that are specific to your volunteer experience at a particular high school, please contact the school's Site Coordinator. Be sure to check out DelawareGoesToCollege.org for additional program information and resources, "follow" us on Twitter, and "like" us on Facebook!

We hope your volunteer experience is a meaningful one, and we thank you in advance for your commitment to this important college access event. We look forward to continuing this tradition across the state for years to come.

Sincerely,

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Typical Volunteer Tasks and Tips

Volunteers help guide students through the college application process and answer any questions students may have, regardless of where the student wishes to apply. **Volunteers do not need to have prior experience helping students fill out college applications; however, we do ask that you review this Volunteer Handbook, your school-specific Volunteer Reference Guide, and our online Volunteer Training Webinar prior to assisting students. You can access these documents as well as the student resources at DelawareGoesToCollege.org under the “College Application Month” tab.** Remember, the most important role of the volunteer is to provide support and encouragement to students throughout the application process!

*NOTE: For logistical information, dress codes, and questions about volunteer responsibilities on the day of your shift, please refer to the **Volunteer Reference Guide** for the school at which you will be volunteering.*

Typical tasks for volunteers may include:

- **Greet students as they arrive to the computer lab and ask them to sign-in.**
- **Help students log on to the online applications of their preferred colleges/universities and begin their application(s).** In the event that students encounter difficulties with an online application, the Site Coordinator should be prepared with paper applications. Volunteers, in that case, can hand out paper applications.
- **Guide students through the online applications and answer questions they may have, regardless of where they wish to apply.** Students should have completed practice applications and essays prior to CAW events. For your reference, a list of commonly asked questions on college applications has been provided by clicking on “FAQs about College Applications” under the “Students and Families” Section of the College Application Month page at DelawareGoesToCollege.org. If you do not know the answer to a student question, please refer the student to the teacher or counselor assigned to the computer lab.
- Students may have questions about application fees and waivers. Some colleges and universities in Delaware and the surrounding region do not have application fees, while others allow for or provide fee waivers. A listing of college and universities that have free applications, along with more information can be found under the “College Application Month” tab at DelawareGoesToCollege.org.
- Some students may be eligible for application fee waivers from the College Board based on their family income status. **If students have questions about eligibility, please refer them to the teacher or counselor assigned to the room.** The Site Coordinator has been provided a listing of colleges and universities that waive their application fees during the school’s CAW events.
- For colleges that require an application fee, **students can use credit/debit cards online** or print their application(s) and mail with a check. For some colleges, students can save their work and submit their applications with payment from home.

- **Monitor printers** to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed.
- **Share personal college experiences** with students. Please remember that students will be applying to a variety of colleges and universities, based on their prior research. The role of a volunteer is to be supportive of students' choices, not to recruit students to a particular school.
- **Remind students that the next important step** in the college application process is to register for their FAFSA username and password. They will need these to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form which will have been available since October 1. Many grants, loans, and scholarships will require students to submit a FAFSA, so this is a very important step. To register for their FAFSA username and password (FSA ID), students should visit <https://fsaid.ed.gov/>. They will need their Social Security Number (SSN), mailing address, and an email address to complete the process. REMEMBER YOUR FSA ID! Write it down if that will help you remember it, and keep it in a safe place!
- **Ask students to sign-out** so the Site Coordinators can track the number of participating students and where they applied.
- **Give "I Applied!" stickers** to students after they complete their college application(s). Provide handouts such as a "What's Next" flyer and reminders to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible, and attend financial aid events to learn about opportunities to fund their education.
- **Congratulate each student** on applying to college and encourage them to complete their admission file by sending in their high school transcript, test scores, and any other documentation that the college may require.
- **Encourage students to share their experience** with their classmates.

The college and financial application process in eight steps!

Step 1: Students who are applying online will go to the college application website and find the colleges to which they are prepared to apply. This could be a website portal with multiple college applications or a specific college website. Check with the school counselor or volunteer if you are unsure. If they are not applying to college online, ask the school counselor for a hard copy of the admissions application.

Step 2: Work with the student, as needed, to complete the application(s).

Step 3: Students may need to submit additional items with their application (e.g., essay, transcripts, SAT or ACT scores, recommendation letters).

Step 4: For colleges that require an application fee, students can use credit/debit cards online or print their application(s) and mail with a check. For some colleges, students can save their work and submit their applications with payment from home. Some students may be eligible for application fee waivers from the College Board based on their family income status. If students have questions

about eligibility, please refer them to the teacher or counselor assigned to the room. The Site Coordinator has been provided a listing of colleges and universities that may waive their application fees during the school's CAW events.

Step 5: Students should print out a copy of their confirmation page if they applied online. If they applied through a paper application, talk to their school counselor about how to make a copy of their application. Remind students to keep the confirmation page or a copy of the application for their records!

Step 6: Remind students to sign-out before leaving the computer lab. Students will need to list the colleges to which they applied.

Step 7: After they sign-out, be sure students receive the handouts provided by their school.

Step 8: Remind students submit any additional information required by the colleges to which they applied. Make sure students know that the next important step in the college application process is to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Congratulations! The application process is complete!

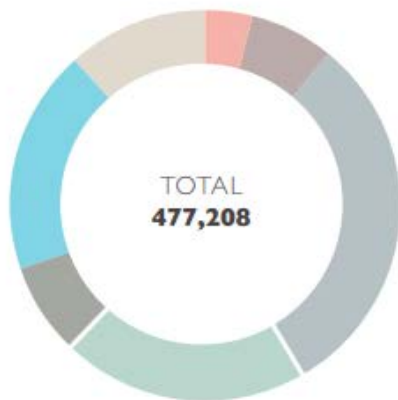
Why College Matters

The goal of Delaware College Application Month (CAM) is to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college, thereby providing a solid foundation for a successful future. The benefits to obtaining a college education are numerous. College graduates earn approximately \$30,000 more per year than non-college graduates, and the unemployment rate is 4.5 percent lower for college graduates. More and more jobs require higher education; in Delaware, it is projected that in five years, 59 percent of jobs will require a postsecondary education. In addition to the economic benefits, college is a great time for students to explore interests and discover their passions. We want all college-ready seniors to apply to college!

“Our goal,” according to Delaware Secretary of Education Mark Murphy, “is that all of our children are prepared for college when they’re finished with high school and can make that first step into college successfully. It is frustrating to see children who are prepared and not taking that step. College Application Month will focus on providing the assistance necessary to be sure college applications are submitted. We will continue to offer support to help students complete the process, including providing guidance on paying for a college education.”

As the graph below indicates, we still have a way to go. The largest percentages of working age adults living in Delaware have received either a high school diploma or completed some college as their highest level of education. Only a little over a third (37.59%) of adults ages 25–64 have obtained either a 2-year, 4-year, or graduate degree. These trends are alarming and must be addressed to meet Delaware’s future workforce needs.

Levels of education for Delaware adults (ages 25-64)



Less than ninth grade	18,742	3.93%
Ninth to 12th grade, no diploma	34,038	7.13%
High school graduate (including equivalency)	147,033	30.81%
Some college, no degree	97,986	20.53%
Associate degree	35,859	7.51%
Bachelor's degree	88,415	18.53%
Graduate or professional degree	55,135	11.55%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

Defining Postsecondary Education

Most workforce developers and education leaders use the word “college” to include any type of postsecondary education, training and credentials, or military service beyond high school. That means students have many options when it comes to attending college. But it also means a high school diploma is no longer enough.

Every Delaware student should plan to complete some type of education beyond high school. The good news is that colleges and universities offer a wide variety of education options to fit the unique needs of all of our state’s students. Options include:

Certificate or Licensing Programs: Certificate and licensing programs are specialized plans of study that are usually intended for students planning to pursue a trade.

Associate’s Degrees: Associate’s degrees are typically awarded to students who complete a two-year program of study at a college or university. These degrees are often required for technical fields, but students can also pursue two-year degrees in business or other professional careers. In Delaware, students can earn an associate’s degree at Delaware Technical Community College, Delaware College of Art and Design, Goldey-Beacom College, University of Delaware, Wesley College, Widener University, and Wilmington University. Associate’s degree students are often eligible for many financial aid programs. For example, the Delaware SEED (Student Excellence Equals Degree) Scholarship Program, provided by the State of Delaware, covers the full cost of tuition for Delaware residents who are admitted to and attend classes on a full-time basis at Delaware Technical Community College or enroll full-time in the University of Delaware’s Associate of Arts program immediately upon graduating from a Delaware high school with a GPA of 2.5 or higher. For further information about and eligibility requirements for the state’s SEED Scholarship Program, please visit http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/dheo.

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. Students can earn a

bachelor's degree at Delaware State University, Goldey-Beacom College, University of Delaware, Wesley College, Widener University, and Wilmington University. Bachelor's degree students also often qualify for state and federal financial aid programs. For example, the Inspire Scholarship is available to Delaware high school graduates with excellent credentials to attend Delaware State University. For further information about and eligibility requirements for the Inspire Scholarship, please visit <http://desu.edu/admissions/inspire-scholarship>.

Student Preparation

Students are encouraged to research colleges and universities prior to their school's College Application Week (CAW) to identify schools that would be their best academic match and fit. School faculty and staff have been guiding students through the state's Student Success Plans, which allow students to explore their interests, skills, possible career paths, and postsecondary options.

In addition, resources and links to particularly useful sites to help students explore colleges and scholarship opportunities are available on DelawareGoesToCollege.org under the "Students" tab. Site Coordinators have been provided a College Research Worksheet to help students understand that their academic match, personal fit, and cost are critical factors when researching colleges. They also have access to a College Application Worksheet that helps students identify some of the most common information asked on applications prior to their school's event.

Many schools guide students through practice applications and provide guidance for college essays or personal statements. Site Coordinators also have access to the Student Checklist to ensure students have the required items to complete a college application.

Teachers and counselors have helped students prepare for their school's CAW by assisting with college exploration and planning. **If students do not have all of the required information to complete an application during their school's CAW, volunteers should encourage them to take the time to work on their application and complete it at home. After submitting their application, students can print out the confirmation page for their counselor's records.**

**We thank you for your role in the success of Delaware College Application Month
and for helping to make students' college dreams come true!**