

Iowa College Application Campaign

College Application:
A ticket to your destination

2014

2014

A Volunteer Resource Guide
October 1 – November 1, 2013



Dear College Application Campaign Volunteer:

On behalf of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) and the Iowa Association for Admission Counseling, thank you for volunteering during College Application Campaign, October 1 through November 1! The goal of College Application Campaign is to provide all seniors at participating high schools the opportunity to apply to college.

While the focus of College Application Campaign is particularly on first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, we encourage participating high schools to include activities for all students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors who have already applied to college. The involvement of volunteers in College Application Campaign will help schools build its college-going culture at the high school.

This is the second year College Application Campaign has been implemented in Iowa. We thank you for helping drive this program and we look forward to continuing this tradition across Iowa for years to come.

Please contact me or your us if you have any questions or concerns about your volunteer role during College Application Campaign. We can be reached at the contact information listed below . Be sure to check our website www.micollegeaccess.org/events/college-application-Campaign for program information for this year's College Application Campaign!

Thank you in advance for your commitment to this important college access event. Your participation will encourage Iowa students and their families to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,

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WHAT'S IN A NAME? UNDERSTANDING THE WORD "COLLEGE"

College is important – there's no doubt about it. At least 62 percent of all new jobs in Iowa will require a college education by 2018, and Iowa needs tens of thousands more college graduates to build our economy¹. But what does that mean for our students?

Most workforce developers and education leaders use the word "college" to include any type of postsecondary education or education and training 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.

On average, four-year college graduates earn more than double the salary of individuals who stopped their education after high school.² And students who complete some form of postsecondary education are far less likely to be unemployed than those with just a high school diploma.

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

- ✓ **Apprenticeships:** An apprenticeship is a training program that combines classroom studies with on-the-job training supervised by a trade professional where students earn wages while learning a skilled profession in a specific field. It can take several years to become fully trained in the occupation of choice. Examples of careers requiring an apprenticeship include electrician, plumber and carpenter.
- ✓ **Certificates and Diplomas:** A certificate or diploma program focuses on a particular skill needed for a specific career and can generally be earned in two years or less at a community college, career/technical/business college or some four-year colleges. Examples of possible careers requiring a certificate or diploma include paralegal, cosmetologist, welder, chef, certified nursing assistant and radiological technician.
- ✓ **Associate Degree:** Associate degrees can usually be earned in two years (sometimes less) at any community college or some career/technical/business colleges and four-year colleges. Some associates degrees can be applied toward a bachelor's degree at a four-year college or university. Examples of possible careers requiring an associate degree include dental hygienist, administrative assistant, registered nurse, veterinary technician and auto mechanic.
- ✓ **Bachelor's Degree:** A bachelor's degree, or undergraduate degree, typically takes at least four years to complete at any four-year college or university. Careers that require a bachelor's degree include teacher, engineer, accountant, dietitian and social worker.

¹ According to data from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce.

² According to data from the College Board's 2010 "Education Pays" report.



Volunteer Resource Manual

We intend for these documents to be a useful guide for Site Coordinators when seeking volunteers for a College Application Campaign event. This Resource Manual is available online at <http://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/Highlights/IowaCollegeAidApplicationCampaign.html> for you to download and print.

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Volunteer Resource Guide

Reaching out to community groups and members during College Application Campaign is an effective way to create a sustainable college-going culture at your school. Additionally, recruiting volunteers to help out or donate food and supplies will help ensure a successful event. We encourage sites to have at least two volunteers for every 25 students at your school on the day of the event. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Use the templates and resources provided to help recruit and inform volunteers for your event.

Managing Volunteers: Step-by-Step

Recruiting Volunteers

1. Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your College Application Campaign event a success by either donating time and/or resources. Some examples may include:
 - Local College Access Network
 - School Alumni
 - Students who have already completed their application/s
 - Student families, PTA (Parent Teacher Association)
 - Local Volunteer Center (www.volunteeriowa.org)
 - Senior or church groups
 - Community College and University representatives, faculty, admissions office and financial aid
 - Business, community, and political leaders
 - Youth programs (i.e., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way)
1. Send potential volunteer groups a College Application Campaign Volunteer Recruitment Letter. When promoting your College Application Campaign event, always mention the need for volunteers in your communication.
2. Reach out to student leaders in your school. For example, students who have already completed their application/s could help other students during the event and be called the “college application ambassadors.”
3. Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Depending on your school district’s policy, you may need to conduct a background check.
4. We recommend having at least one staff member and two volunteers at all times when working with a group of 20-25.

Information for Volunteers

1. Identify specific responsibilities and duties for your volunteers. For example, you may create shifts for greeting, sign-in, computer lab, other activities, etc. Create a short explanation of each responsibility for volunteers to follow throughout the day.
2. Finalize a volunteer list and, as a reminder, send information using the following template notifying volunteers of event details.
3. Provide name tags for volunteers on the day of the event.
4. Conduct a quick orientation, perhaps the morning of the event, to familiarize volunteers on the details of your event. Provide volunteers with a Volunteer Reference Guide to College Application Campaign.

Follow-Up

5. Send a thank you letter to all volunteers for their dedication to College Application Campaign.



Volunteer Recruitment Letter/Email

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS
DATE

September 2013

Dear (NAME OF ORGANIZATION),

(NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) is pleased to announce its participation in the statewide Iowa College Application Campaign. As a participant, we will be hosting college planning activities during the week of (insert Campaign of your events).

The goal of Iowa College Application Campaign is to provide an opportunity for all Iowa high school seniors to complete and file college applications. While the focus is on helping all students, special attention will be given to first-generation, minority, and other students who might face barriers in applying to college.

We will be hosting special events to assist students in completing college applications on (DATES) and would welcome (INSERT REQUEST: ASSISTANCE, DONATIONS, ETC.). With your help, students can connect to resources available outside the classroom that will help them prepare for college. Our students would appreciate and benefit from your help and support as they take a big step toward going to college.

If you are able to assist us in making Iowa College Application Campaign a success, please contact (NAME, CONTACT INFO AT NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL).
Thank you!

(YOUR NAME)
(YOUR TITLE)
(CONTACT INFO)



Volunteer Information for College Application Campaign

Welcome to Iowa College Application Campaign at (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL)! We appreciate your hard work and dedication to making college a reality for our students. Use this reference guide to familiarize yourself with more information about Iowa College Application Campaign.

- ✓ **College Application Campaign is an event** sponsored by Iowa College Aid, the Iowa Association for Admission Counseling and (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL).
- ✓ **Goal** of College Application Campaign is to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college, with a particular focus on helping first-generation students low-income students, and students who may not otherwise apply to college.
- ✓ Students are encouraged to **research different college and universities** in order to find the best fit for them **prior** to College Application Campaign. I Have A Plan Iowa® has **online resources** such as School Finder, College Matching Assistant, Compares Schools and Distance Search. This tool is completely free for Iowa students and their families.
- ✓ Host sites are to provide a designated space and time **during the school day** for completing applications.
- ✓ Students may have questions about **application fees and waivers**. Note that some colleges and universities in Iowa do not have an application fee, many online applications have an automatic fee waiver.
- ✓ Some students may be **eligible for an application fee waiver** from their high school guidance counselor based on their family income status. If students have questions about eligibility, please refer them to their guidance counselor.
- ✓ For colleges that require an application fee, **students can use credit / debit cards online**, which we suggest they do at home with a parent, or print their online application(s) and mail with a check to the college(s).
- ✓ In order to be **eligible for financial student aid**, college applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1 of their senior year. The earlier students and parents/guardians complete and submit this form, the better!
- ✓ **FAFSA – Iowa College Goal Sunday** is held each year the Sunday after the Super Bowl. During College Goal Sunday, seniors can receive free help completing and submitting their FAFSA form at any of the event locations across the state. Mark your calendars for February 9! An up-to-date listing of locations can be found at www.iowacgs.org/.
- ✓ Remember you are there to assist students; don't recruit to a specific campus.
- ✓ Prior to arriving – confirm day/time you are expected with the site coordinator, confirm any visitor guidelines for the high school



Potential Volunteer Tasks

When assigning tasks, consider the expertise and comfort level of the volunteer with various roles. The power of the volunteer comes from students seeing that members of the broader community see education as an important goal.

- Post (possibly create) directional signs in the school for the event. Good signage is key to reminding students of the event and getting them to the right place.
- Greet students as they arrive. Make sure they use the sign-in sheet.
- Help students log on to I Have A Plan Iowa® or go to a specific college/university website and begin an application. If the school does not have enough computers or stable online service, the site coordinator should be prepared with paper applications. As a volunteer, you can hand out the correct application.
- Guide students through the college application process and help answer any questions students may have, regardless of where the student wishes to apply.
- 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.
- Instruct each student to complete an evaluation of their College Application Campaign experience (if applicable, not all site may choose to use the student evaluation form).
- Give an “I Applied!” sticker and a “What’s Next?” handout to each student after they complete an application.
- Remind students to use the sign-out sheet before leaving. Site coordinators need to track where students applied.
- Congratulate each student on applying to college and encourage them to complete their admission file by sending in their high school transcript, test scores, or any other documentation that the college may require.
- Remind students to share their experience with others and to remember to attend the Financial Aid Day (FAFSA Day, College Goal Saturday/Sunday, etc.) that will be held in your community. Handouts may be available regarding the upcoming Financial Aid events.
- Wear a college t-shirt or sweatshirt.



Volunteer Training – Example Agenda

Training volunteers for College Application Campaign is not a complex task. You want to provide volunteers with enough information to be useful to you and the students but not so much as to overwhelm them. In addition to the very real assistance they can provide to ensure that College Application Campaign is successful, they also are likely to become college access advocates in the community.

Iowa College Aid will provide one webinar training for volunteers. It will cover the basic needs and expectations for volunteers across the state. It will NOT cover the individual site needs for each host high school. Host sites are not required to provide a volunteer training. It is up to you based on who you have selected as volunteers and if they feel comfortable with the tasks you are expecting them to complete. You can provide it as a short face-to-face gathering either a week before the event or the day of the event. If your school requires a background check for non-school personnel to work with students on your campus, then be sure to handle this requirement prior to the training.

- I. Welcome and Thank You!
 - Have all volunteers sign in and provide you with name, phone number(s), and address (you will need the address later when you send a follow-up thank you note)

- II. Purpose of College Application 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 in the fall of their senior year will increase their options as they decide what to do after high school.
 - To provide additional information to students about the college going process such as a) what to do when they hear back from an institution and b) how to apply for financial aid.
 - To reinforce a college-going culture in the community.
 - This is not a recruitment activity for a specific school. If a volunteer has a strong relationship (or love) for a particular school, it is important to leave it at the door.

- III. College Application Campaign Logistics
 - Provide a short tour of the school highlighting where the event will be held, principal's office, facilities they may use or go into and those that they should not
 - Dates and times College Application Campaign/Day will be held in our school
 - Times that volunteers are expected to be available (it is strongly recommended that they are asked to arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the start of the event)
 - Assign tasks to be done by volunteers (see task list)
 - Review FAQs

- IV. Questions?

- V. Again – thank you!



Volunteer Thank You Letter

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS

November 2013

Dear (VOLUNTEER'S NAME),

On behalf of (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) I would like to personally thank you for volunteering your time at our Iowa College Application Campaign event. This event could not have been a success without your help and the help of many others who volunteered their time.

During Iowa College Application Campaign, (NUMBER OF SENIORS SUBMITTING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS) of our seniors submitted over (NUMBER OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED) college applications to colleges and universities across Iowa. Thanks to our seniors' hard work and the assistance of volunteers like you, they are one step closer to actualizing their dreams of attending college!

Once again, (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time at College Application Campaign! We look forward to seeing you throughout the school year and especially at our event next year.

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME)
(YOUR TITLE)



College Application Campaign is an initiative of Iowa College Aid, and its partner Iowa Association for Admission Counseling. As a state agency, Iowa College Aid is dedicated to making the path to education and training beyond high school easier for Iowans. Iowa College Aid provides college access, career planning, financial literacy and outreach services that prepare students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. For more information, visit www.iowacollegeaid.gov.

Iowa College Aid and the Iowa Association for College Admission would like to thank the Michigan College Access Network for their help in creating this Resource Guide, of which sections have been adapted from their guide.