



**NEXT
STEPS**

IDAHO

College Application Week

Site Coordinator Handbook

Overview



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Overview

The Idaho Office of the State Board of Education and the Idaho College Application Week Steering Committee thank you for hosting College Application Week at your school. The goals of this program are to provide an opportunity for all Idaho seniors to complete at least one college application, to generate excitement about going on to college, and to inform students and families at your school about the college application and preparation process.

This handbook is designed to assist you in planning and implementing your College Application Week event. It's packed with tips, helpful hints, and resources from colleagues around the country. It takes time and effort to make this a success, and the Board sincerely appreciates your commitment to helping Idaho students get to college.

History of College Application Week

College Application Week started in North Carolina in 2005. Since then, the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) has grown into a national effort, sponsored by the American Council on Education (ACE). Its aim is to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing a college degree or other higher education credential. In November of 2013, Idaho joined the ACAC with a pilot program of 21 schools that hosted College Application Week events.

Program Overview

High schools can choose any week in October (Next Steps Month) to designate as their College Application Week. Participating schools agree to host events where adults (educators and volunteers) help students through the college application process. While the events are geared toward students who may not otherwise apply to college (by taking a step-by-step, individualized approach) the most successful schools include activities for all students, including underclassmen and seniors who have already applied to college. Involving faculty, staff, and your community can help excitement for the week and boost participation in your events.

College Application Week supports the state's 60% attainment goal – a key factor in strengthening Idaho's workforce and preparing for our future economic needs. We know that as educational attainment increases, individual income potential increases and the percent of our population living in poverty decreases.



Section 1

General Recommendations

Planning College Application Week at Your School

With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your College Application Week will inspire all students to prepare for college and a career.



Identify a Site Coordinator

A site coordinator can be a counselor or advisor, a GEAR UP, GO ON or TRiO coordinator, or even a teacher or parent volunteer. The coordinator will be responsible for planning and implementing College Application Week (CAW) at your school and for communicating with the CAW staff at the State Board Office. It may also be helpful to choose a co-coordinator or committee to help plan and implement your event.

Encourage School-Wide Involvement

Get the entire school excited about the event and applying to college. Remember, it's never too early to begin thinking about college. Encourage all students and staff to participate in activities, such as holding daily trivia contests, wearing college shirts, sharing college stories, or decorating classroom doors with college logos, photos and other mementos. Perhaps the cafeteria staff could be involved with reminders on the day of by creatively named menu items!

Recruit Volunteers

Most successful CAW events involve volunteers from the community who are on-hand to greet students and help them as they complete their applications, remind them to fill out the CAW survey, and congratulate them on submitting applications as they leave.

Promote Your Event

The CAW Steering Committee at the State Board is responsible for building statewide exposure for the initiative. The school (site coordinator) is responsible promoting activities to your school as well as your local community.

Encourage Students to Complete College Research Prior to the Event

Get the entire school excited about the event and applying to college. Remember, it's never too early to begin thinking about college. Encourage all students and staff to participate in activities, such as holding daily trivia contests, wearing college shirts, sharing college stories, or decorating classroom doors with college logos, photos and other mementos. Perhaps the cafeteria staff could be involved with reminders on the day of by creatively named menu items!

Allow for Adequate Student Preparation Prior to the Event

Help students make the most of their College Application Week experience by encouraging them to arrive with all of the necessary information and supplementary documents needed to complete their applications.

Provide all Seniors and GED Candidates Access to the Event

To help ensure students are able to make the most of their College Application Week experience, students should arrive to the event with a list of colleges that they have determined would be a good match for them and to which they would like to apply. Consider developing a worksheet or online activity to help guide students through the process of researching colleges.

Helpful Hints

Including students on your school-wide planning team will encourage greater participation and excitement for your event. Consider offering community service hours or offering the opportunity as a senior project.

Some sites prefer to host their CAW event on just one day; others prefer to offer multiple opportunities throughout the week. It's up to you to determine what will work best at your site.

Site Coordinator Pre-Event Checklist

This table is designed to provide guidance in your planning. Many of these are tasks necessary to produce College Application Week (CAW) events, but it may not be exhaustive for your site. Use the blank spaces for additional tasks you may need to plan your event. Recruit volunteers and co-workers to help.

Status	Due Date	Task	Notes
		Recruit your core Idaho College Application Week implementation team and meet with them to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates of your site's College Application Week • Which activities you plan to undertake Sign up to participate by completing the interest survey on the CAW website: https://gotocollege.idaho.gov/	
		Review this document fully (Site Coordinator Handbook) and the CAW website. Learn about Direct Admissions and Apply Idaho on the Next Steps website: https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/ . Contact the state coordinator with any initial questions.	
		Reserve computer lab or other appropriate space for your CAW activities.	
		Add CAW activities to your school or organization's calendar of events.	
		Complete the Pre-event Information Survey to inform the Idaho CAW Steering Committee about your plans.	
		Download and distribute the Teacher Overview handout from the CAW website. Encourage teachers and staff to brainstorm additional college awareness and readiness activities to be held during your event.	
		Send a notice home to parents about Idaho CAW and encourage them to talk with their students about the event and application process (Download a Family Letter template on the CAW website).	
		Solicit door prizes from area colleges and businesses that can be used during your event.	
		Request that your local government entity proclaims your selected week as "College Application Week in [your town/city/county/ etc.]"	
		Use sample press release and PSA's to help spread the word in your community. Download samples from the CAW website.	
		Work with your school registrar to get list of of all seniors. This list should have their Legal Name, Date of Birth and their EDUID numbers. Students will also need a non-school email address.	

Site Coordinator Checklist – Event Day Tasks

This checklist offers essential reminders for a successful College Application Week event. You may find that there are other tasks to complete on the day of your site's event. Use the blank space to customize this list to your site.

Status	Due Date	Task	Notes
		Turn on all computers and direct your preferred web browser to nextsteps.idaho.gov	
		Post required school information (mailing address, phone, CEEB code, etc.) in each computer lab or classroom where students will be completing online applications. Students may need to reference this information when completing applications. (Download a School Information poster from the CAW website.) Post the link for the Opportunity Scholarship application.	
		Greet volunteers, provide them with a nametag, and give them a job to do.	
		Have seniors sign in as they arrive. A sample sign-in sheet is available on the CAW website, but ideally you'll print a list of all seniors' legal names and EDUID numbers to use as a sign-in sheet.	
		Distribute the "You've Applied ... Now What?" Handout. (Download a copy from the CAW website.)	
		Be sure that when students complete and submit their application(s), they print confirmation page(s) or save their application(s) for final work within the next day or two. Students using Apply Idaho should write down their username and password in case they need to come back in and add another school later.	
		Before students leave, ensure they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign out on the sign in/sign out sheet and identify all colleges to which they submitted an application. • Review the "You've Applied ... Now What?" handout 	

Section 2

Ideas for Engaging Others in Your Efforts

Getting the Support You Need

The success of the College Application Week event relies on a fully engaged school and community help, where practical. Engaging staff and students from your school in the planning and implementation process will create excitement about the event.



Students

When students see their peers get excited about something, they want to become a part of whatever is causing the buzz. Capitalize on positive peer pressure to make your CAW event a success.

- Identify students from each grade who could provide ideas and become part of your planning committee. Help them understand the goals of College Application Week and ask them to share ideas for your events and how to promote them.
- Recruit seniors to mentor freshman, sophomores, and juniors on preparing for post-secondary education. Senior mentors can meet with assigned freshmen, sophomores, or juniors during College Application Week or recruit them as volunteers to help during the week.
- Ask students to promote the event through their Instagram, Facebook or Twitter accounts. Nationwide, students will be using the #IApplied! Twitter hashtag to celebrate their participation.
- Encourage a school wide “college gear” week and reward students who wear college affiliated clothing.

School Staff and Support Personnel

College Application Weeks are the most successful when the whole school gets involved.

- Encourage your school support staff (including custodians, cooks, and administrative assistants) to wear college gear, post signs and information about College Application Week, and to encourage students with whom they interact to participate.

Teachers

Teachers are your greatest allies in motivating students to pursue higher education. It’s not only their job; it’s their passion. Share the calendar with them and ask for their help in brainstorming ways to make this event something the whole school embraces.

- Ask teachers to incorporate college planning and exploration activities into their lesson plans in the week(s) leading up to College Application Week. Examples might include: learning about paying for college, calculating a return on investment, writing college or scholarship application essays, or figuring out what kind of career a student might need to pay for the lifestyle they want.
- Ask teachers to wear their favorite college gear during College Application Week.
- Ask teachers to post fliers on their doors to share their personal stories: where they attended college, what they studied, a favorite memory and encourage students to ask them about their experiences.
- Encourage teachers to decorate their classrooms and doors with college pennants, posters, and information.

Community Engagement

- Ask local businesses to donate raffle prizes for participating seniors. Request items that could be useful for a student’s first year of college – something to decorate a dorm room, a shower caddy, or even a tune-up for their car.
- Request that the neighborhood ice cream shop or sandwich place get involved by offering a free cone or cookie to any student who participated in your CAW event.
- Recruit community volunteers to assist students on the day of the event.
- Encourage parents to participate in your event as volunteers.

Getting the Support You Need

Students will feel most supported if they have adults helping them through the college application process (this is the goal of CAW). Ideally, you will have at least one staff member and two volunteers at all times when working with a group of 20-25 students (3 adults total). You may want additional volunteers who can assist with non-application tasks, but lend a hand with administrative responsibilities, or simply show students there is broad support for the important work they are doing during College Application Week.

Potential Volunteer Responsibilities

- Post 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 access the Next Steps Idaho and Apply Idaho websites or find the specific college/university website they're looking for and begin an 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.
- Ask students if they completed the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship application. Help them locate the application and apply, if they haven't yet done so.
- Help students start the FAFSA process, including signing up for a FAFSA ID/PIN.
- Remind students to use the sign-out sheet before leaving so that site coordinators can track the number of students who participated and where students applied.
- Wear a college t-shirt or sweatshirt.

Recruiting Volunteers

To recruit volunteers, start by identifying organizations (nonprofits, businesses, service organizations) or individuals in your community who may be willing to contribute to making your College Application Week a success. The presence of community members in your school can bolster the excitement, demonstrate the importance of the initiative, and showcase your community's dedication to student success.

Consider including the following groups of people in your CAW events:

- School alumni
- Students' families, the PTA/O, the School Improvement Council
- Students who have already completed their applications (call them "College Application Ambassadors"!)
- Retired Educators
- Community services, senior citizens, or church groups
- College and university representatives and faculty
- Business, community, and political leaders

To begin recruiting, send potential volunteer groups a College Application Week Volunteer Recruitment Letter (download a template from the <http://gotocollege.idaho.gov> website).

In your letter, identify specific responsibilities and duties for your volunteers. You may want to 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. (See the "Potential Volunteer Tasks" section for a list of ideas.)

You'll need to create a system for collecting volunteer information, which might be as simple as starting a Word or Excel document – or even a handwritten tracking sheet. Depending on your school district's policy, you may need to conduct a background check, run volunteer names through Idaho's Sex Offender List and/or make sure that school staff or IACRAO (College and University Staff) are always present when students are present.

Once you finalize your volunteer list, send each volunteer a reminder with the date and time of their shift, and encourage volunteers to visit the CAW website to review materials and encourage volunteers to dress in college gear.

On the day of your event, be sure to provide name tags for volunteers and conduct a quick orientation to familiarize them with the details of your event and how they are expected to help. Make sure that volunteers are familiar with the confidentiality of student records. Limit access to personally identifiable information to school staff or IACRAO volunteers assisting with the application process.

Training Volunteers

Training volunteers for College Application Week is not complex, but you want to provide them with enough information that they can be helpful to students.

This sample volunteer training agenda covers the basic needs and expectations for volunteers helping out with CAW events. Be sure you consider the specifics your volunteers may need to know at your school or community-based organization.

While your site is not required to provide a volunteer training, providing one empowers your volunteers with the information they need to help students. You might consider a short face-to-face gathering a week before the event or covering everything on the day of the event. If your school requires a background check for non-school personnel to work with students on your campus, be sure to handle this requirement prior to the training.

Sample Volunteer Training Agenda

1. Welcome and Thank You

- a. Have all volunteers sign in and provide you with name, phone number, and address (you will need this for a follow-up thank you note).

2. Purpose of College Application Week

- a. 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.
- b. To provide additional information to students about the college process such as what to do when they hear back from an institution, and how to apply for financial aid.
- c. To reinforce a college-going culture in the community.
- d. This is not a recruitment activity for a specific school. If a volunteer has a strong relationship with a particular school, it is important to leave it at the door.

3. College Application Week Logistics

- a. Provide a short tour of the school, highlighting where the event will be held, main office, facilities they may use or go into, as well as those that they should not.
- b. Dates and times College Application Week/Day will be held.
- c. 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).
- d. Assign tasks to be done by volunteers (see task list).
- e. Review College Application Worksheet and Application FAQs.

4. Questions?

Follow Up

Be sure to send a thank you letter to volunteers for their help during College Application Week!

Section 3

On-Site Promotion Ideas

Promoting Your College Application Week Event

Building excitement for your College Application Week event is critical to getting high levels of student participation. While much of the focus for College Application Week is geared toward seniors, a truly successful event gets your whole school, and possibly your community, actively engaged.



You'll want to do everything you can to get the word out! In addition to increasing the number of students who attend your event, promoting College Application Week is a great opportunity to continue building a college-going culture in your community.

PA Announcements

- Use daily PA announcements to generate awareness of College Application Week activities at your school or organization.
- Use the PA announcements to build general awareness of local colleges and universities. Encourage students to research a school that interests them and develop a brief, informational "ad" to be read during morning or afternoon announcements. End the announcements with a plug for College Application Week: "Like what you hear? Consider applying during College Application Week!"
- If you have a morning news program, coordinate with the producers to feature a count-down or a fun fact each morning leading up to the event. Coordinate interviews with students who plan to attend/participate in the event. Student newspapers and newsletters are also a great place to highlight the event. Encourage student writers to feature stories about the event.

Host a College "Prep Rally"

- Talk with your administrators about holding a kick-off "prep rally" to get everyone in the college frame of mind.
- Ask students to wear college gear from their favorite schools.
- Introduce/feature seniors who have already been accepted into a school or certificate program and have them tell the student body the one thing they are most looking forward to in college or why they selected the school or program they did.
- Incorporate contests and fun activities and get your student clubs involved in building enthusiasm.

Friendly Competition

- Sponsor a contest between the different grades to inspire all students to think about the college preparation process during College Application Week. Classes can compete against each other to design the best "College App Wall," or to come up with the best idea to promote College Application Week and college awareness.

Host Homeroom Workshops

Conduct workshops during homeroom with students throughout College Application Week. Use the Next Steps Website High School Learning Plan activities to help. Other potential workshop topics include:

- **Freshmen:** Decision making, learning styles, study habits, high school transcript and academic planning, connection between school and careers, how to qualify for a scholarship, colleges and the degrees offered, college admission criteria, etc.
- **Sophomores:** Progress reports, extracurricular activities, earning college credit during high school, world of work, college costs and ways to pay, college visits, PSAT, etc.
- **Juniors:** Money management, finding scholarships, admission process, ACT and SAT test preparation, preparing to apply, writing personal statements and essays, etc.
- **Seniors:** What to expect in college, resume writing, FAFSA, searching for scholarships, finding the right college for you, etc.

Dress the Part

- During College Application Week, encourage teachers and staff to wear a t-shirt, sweatshirt, or hat from the college they attended or have them bring in their college yearbook or other items with their college mascot to share with students and decorate their classrooms or workspaces.

Involve other School Activities

- Ask coaches to have announcements made at sporting events and practices.
- Have your parent-teacher organizations send out in their emails and announce at meetings.
- Ask the cafeteria, library, health, and administrative staff to get involved by posting signs of support and providing encouragement to apply to college!

Host a Parent and Family Night

- Sponsor a parent and family night and have parents, family members, and community members who have completed college participate in a panel to talk about their college choices, why they made them, and what they are currently doing.
- Invite parents and families to come up with questions or discussion ideas.

Invite Guest Speakers

- Invite admissions staff from local colleges and universities to provide general information related to their campus, including the majors offered, admission requirements, the application process, and cost of attendance.
- Connect college to career by inviting speakers to talk about the work they do and what education was necessary to accomplish their goals.

Conduct “Trial Runs” in Classes

- Complete a sample application with students. Teachers can go over the correct grammar and language to use on a college application. Stress the importance of using appropriate e-mail addresses. It should sound professional and provide a good impression of the student. If necessary, have students create an e-mail address specifically for their college communications and complete the CAW College Application Information Sheet.
- Encourage students to research a college major they think they might be interested in pursuing. Have them identify which colleges offer the major, what type of jobs/careers are typically held by people obtaining a degree in that major, what type of courses are required to obtain a degree in that major, etc. and then have them present this information to their classmates.
- Encourage English teachers to incorporate writing college and scholarship essays into their class curriculum.

Communicate

- Send letters or e-mail reminders to all parents, students, and school staff. Also, include information in the school newsletter.

Promoting Your College Application Week Event

You can host a successful College Application Week without including your community, but event will be even better if you spread the word beyond the walls of your school or organization. Community members make great volunteers, and they can also help build and maintain a college-going culture among your students. Help them show support for your students and their aspirations by sharing news and information and providing them with concrete opportunities to assist you.

Local Press

- Local newspapers are frequently looking for positive stories. Give them the opportunity to tell your neighbors about your students' goals and plans. Write a press release and get it to your local media sources about 1-2 weeks before the event.
- Invite reporters to observe the event or conduct an interview to get more information.
- Submit a press release after your event is over to share all of your success and attach photos.
- Local radio stations also want to share positive stories. Include them when you send out press releases. Ask if they will allow you to record a Public Service Announcement.

Business Support

- Ask local businesses, especially those where your students and their families shop, to show their support of students' college aspirations and your College Application Week event by hanging a CAW sign in their storefront.

Section 4

Important Student Reminders

Important Student Information & Resources

Students are strongly encouraged to explore colleges prior to the College Application Week event at your site. Many online resources exist to help students with this process, in addition to the IACRAO Higher Education in Idaho booklet.



Before your event, try to prepare students as much as possible.

Here are some helpful reminders for you and your students:

1. Seniors should complete the College Application Information Sheet (Appendix) to make sure they've prepared the information they will need to complete college applications at the schools where they want to apply.
2. Students may be eligible for application fee waivers. Ideally, you should work with your guidance office to contact students who may be eligible for a fee waiver or deferment in advance of College Application week. Usually, students who are eligible for fee waivers and deferments on college entrance exams are also eligible for college application fee waivers and deferments.
3. Identify students who have not yet applied to college and begin working with them to explore their options. Encourage other staff members to work with students and be sure to foster a culture in your school that considers every student to be "college material".
4. Remind students that information about their addresses and parents will be used to determine tuition and residency for public colleges and universities, so they need to ensure they discuss this with their parents and are prepared to provide accurate addresses for parents on their college applications.
5. Social Security Information – A student needs to know their Social Security Number (SSN) or know how to access this. Many college applications require the SSN and they may not be able to complete them without this information.
6. Students who have taken dual credit while in high school will need to know from which college they have or are earning college credit. Please remind students that they will need to request transcripts of their college credits to be sent. This is confusing and frequently students think that their high school transcript will suffice.

Application Fees

If students are applying to Idaho Public schools during Idaho College Application Week and have received a direct admission letter, they should be able to apply to the institutions for free. Students applying to private institutions or to out of state institutions will usually be required to pay an application fee to complete the process. Ideally, students will have identified the institution they want to attend and come prepared with the means to pay any required application fees.

While most online application forms provide a means of paying the application fee via credit card, in some cases a check can be mailed directly to the college or university after the on-line application has been submitted. If students choose this option, please be sure to remind the student to send a copy of his/her confirmation page with payment or advise the student to put their full name and phone number on the check so that their account is properly credited.

Fee Waiver

Application fees may be waived for students who meet certain indicators of economic need. Many colleges and universities requiring an application fee will accept a completed application fee waiver form from ACT, the College Board, or the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). NACAC's form is available at <https://www.nacacfairs.org/globalassets/college-fair--homepage/ncf-documents/learn/2018decfeewaiver-fillable.pdf>.

Direct Admissions

Each fall, high school seniors and their parents or guardians are notified of their acceptance and encouraged to research the academic and professional-technical programs offered throughout the state's community colleges and four-year institutions. Students are required to complete an admission application to the institution of their choice as a next step in the admissions process and can apply to one or more of Idaho's colleges or universities at once, and for free, using Apply Idaho. Students can access their Direct Admissions notification by creating an Apply Idaho account and should ask a counselor if they encounter problems.

Apply Idaho: 10 Colleges & Universities, 1 App

Apply Idaho allows Idaho students to submit applications to any or all eight of Idaho's public colleges and universities (and Northwest Nazarene University and the College of Idaho) at one time, without paying any application fees. Before getting started on the applications students might want to watch the demo videos so they will know what to expect. Site coordinators and other interested school staff should also review these two videos to become familiar with the process.

Online College Search Tools

The Next Steps website (NextSteps.Idaho.gov) is a great place for students to begin their research. It provides information about Idaho schools, links to national college search engines, the College Application Information Sheet, and a Frequently Asked Questions page about required information for their applications, as well as information and links to scholarship and FAFSA websites.

When they are ready to complete their applications, they'll find a page linking them to the application pages of every public university or community college in Idaho, as well as Idaho's common application: Apply Idaho.

Students just beginning their college search may find these additional sites helpful:

- Big Future – a comprehensive college search engine: <http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- Peterson's College Search – National College Search Engine <https://www.petersons.com/college-search.aspx>

IACRAO – Admissions Directory

The Idaho Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers is another great resource for finding information about all Idaho Institutions. If you need links to other Idaho institutions, please find them at this link:

<http://iacrao.weebly.com/directory.html>

IACRAO Higher Education in Idaho Booklet

Students may want to use this booklet as they explore campuses and majors:

iacrao.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/105088129/highereducation_day_booklet_2.pdf

Idaho Opportunity Scholarship

The Idaho Opportunity Scholarship is a need-based award available to graduates of Idaho high schools who are planning on attending a public or private non-profit Idaho institution. This scholarship is renewable for up to four years. Application Link:

<https://isbe.smapply.io/>

<https://boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships/idaho-opportunity-scholarship/>

As an added benefit to schools participating in Idaho College Application Week, the Idaho State Board of Education has adjusted the scholarship application date so that seniors will have the chance to apply for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship at the same time they complete their college applications. In order to be eligible, students must:

- Have a cumulative unweighted GPA of at least a 2.7. Be U.S. citizens and Idaho residents
- Graduate of an Idaho high school
- Plan on attending college the fall semester immediately after graduation Complete the FAFSA by March 1
- Complete the scholarship application by March 1

See <https://boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships/> for details.

The application is very short, and you should encourage all seniors to complete this application during your Idaho College Application Week Activities.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Start helping students and families learn more about the cost of college and options to assist in paying for college. Some helpful resources are:

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/afsa>

<https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/primary-topic/paying-for-school/>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college>

Section 5

Adding Financial Aid Help & FAFSA to Your College Application Week Events

Applying to college is one of the steps necessary to help our students on the path to college, another important step is helping them figure out how they will pay for college. Paying for college can be intimidating for all students and families, but it's especially so for low income and/or first-generation families who may not believe they have the resources or information necessary to make it possible. Sharing information is one way to help alleviate those fears.



You may want to consider hosting a financial aid night during your College Application Week:

- Include information about all the different types of financial aid students might be eligible for.
- Send out emails to parents, students, and teachers about your financial aid night.
- Make sure your students have access to the resources, if they aren't able to attend.

Be inclusive. When possible, include information about paying for college as an undocumented student in all of your presentations. The following [link](#) is helpful for those students wanting to go on to postsecondary education. Consider sharing [FAQ's](#) for DACA students with a Social Security Number completing FAFSA.

FAFSA

Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for federal financial aid programs like the Pell grant and Stafford Loans. It is also the financial aid application that most students will need to submit to be eligible for state aid like the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship. Many colleges also use the FAFSA to determine institutional need-based aid.

Undocumented students are not eligible for federal financial aid programs, but many will be eligible for institutional aid or other scholarships. They should contact the financial aid office at the college or university that they are interested in/attending and ask how to be considered for their institutional aid. (Note: some colleges may request that an undocumented student complete a paper FAFSA to be considered for institutional aid; these should not be submitted to the federal government.)

Completing the FAFSA can be daunting for some families. You can help:

Track your school's FAFSA completion rates and student progress

- Register with Idaho's FAFSA Web to receive regular updates about which of your students have submitted FAFSA so you can follow up with those who haven't yet done so.
- Use updates from FAFSA Web and your own tracking of FAFSA completion to keep an eye on overall numbers.

Host a FAFSA completion event

- Invite both students and their families to participate.

FAFSA

Resources

Use these for your financial aid event or provide them to students and/or families to explore and learn more about the financial aid process:

Toolkits & Presentations

- [Federal Student Aid Toolkit](#)
- [How to create your FSA ID presentation has an overview of the creation of your FSA ID account and the importance of that account.](#)
- [How to complete FAFSA video can be helpful if students need to complete FAFSA at home and need guidance.](#)
- [Oregon GEAR UP's Financial Aid 102 presentation offers info and fun activities.](#)

Handouts

- [FAFSA on the Web Worksheet](#)
- [FAFSA Independence Eligibility](#)
- [General FAFSA Information](#)

Websites

- [FAFSA Demo Site](#): Practice filling out the FAFSA or use it as your dummy form in large group presentations.
username: eddemo
password: fafsatest
- [Studentaid.ed.gov/sa/](#) has great resources for understanding how to get to college, the types of financial aid, and how to apply.
- Many private colleges require the [CSS Profile](#), an additional financial aid form. Host a workshop to help students complete it.

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are a lot of scholarships available for students. Finding scholarships and submitting applications can be daunting, so it's critical to provide time and support for students to do this work.

Institutional Scholarships

Some colleges and universities automatically consider students for all available scholarships when they submit an application for admission. Others have additional application forms or deadlines.

Find more information at www.boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships.

Idaho State Board of Education Scholarships

- GEAR UP Idaho Scholarship 2
- Idaho Opportunity Scholarship - *The Opportunity Scholarship awards eligible applicants up to \$3,500 per year and is renewable for up to four years.*
- Armed Forces / Public Safety Officer Dependent Scholarship
- Governor's Cup Scholarship
- Tschudy Family Scholarship - *Emmett High School Specific*
- Idaho Post-Secondary Credit Scholarship - *Award available for students with ten or more postsecondary credits at time of high school graduation.*

National Scholarships

There are many national scholarship searches students can use to find and apply for money for college. Make sure students understand they should never have to pay to apply for a scholarship or use an online research tool.

Suggested national scholarship searches:

- Petersons:
www.petersons.com/scholarship-search.aspx
- Big Future:
bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search
- Fastweb:
www.fastweb.com

To search for Idaho scholarships visit:
nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarships

FINANCIAL LITERACY & BUDGETING

Paying for college doesn't end with financial aid applications and award comparisons. In fact, many students find that they struggle with the part of paying for college that comes once they're on campus – not just paying their tuition bill, but also buying books, getting around town, and participating in fun activities. Helping students think about the future by teaching them about building a realistic college budget can alleviate potential problems:

Note When students are applying for FAFSA, encourage them to say yes to the “work study” option.

- Start early! Incorporate financial education in the classroom using free financial literacy curriculum.
- Make it part of class. Encourage math teachers to build a budgeting exercise into their lesson plans.
- Use volunteers from local banks, credit unions or organizations like Financial Beginnings to teach students how to make good financial decisions that will help them successfully transition from high school to college.
- Post information about financial awareness in visible places. Help make conversations about money a regular thing in your building.

Resources

Curriculum

- The FDIC offers a free and ready-to-use curriculum about money management, [Money Smart for Young People](#), for every age.
- The [High School Financial Planning Program](#) is a free, turnkey curriculum for grades 8-12.
- Use [Sallie Mae](#) to learn about loan options.

Websites & Handouts

- ECMC has a series of flyers on [Financial Awareness Basics](#) to share with students and families.
- Help students walk through the process of [Creating a Budget](#) with this step-by-step worksheet.
- [It's a Money Thing](#) offers helpful videos to learn about budgeting, saving, and what your credit score means.

FINANCIAL AID AWARDS & LOANS

Financial aid award letters are often confusing to students and families. It may not be easy to make direct comparisons between schools or to understand the specifics. In addition, higher education loans and debt dominate the news cycle around college application time.

Taking out loans for college can be scary for students and families, yet most students find they need to do so to be able to afford to go. Many educators aren't experts in financial advising, and many more don't want the responsibility of offering advice. But you can help students understand what a loan is, what repayment will mean for them, and encourage families to have difficult conversations about what works for them.

- Help students and families understand and compare financial aid award letters.
- Give a presentation about responsible student loan borrowing.
- Invite a college financial aid administrator to speak to your students and/or families about borrowing money for college. Ask them to talk frankly about the differences between Federal student loans (both subsidized and unsubsidized), Parent PLUS loans, and private student loans.
- Teach students to use a [loan repayment calculator](#) and provide time for them to use it for every financial aid package they receive from colleges.
- Encourage them to pay particular attention to the estimated salary required to afford repayment. The College Scorecard has the average salary and default rates for colleges.
- **Tip:** Remind them to multiply the loan amount by the number of years they plan to be in college!

Resources

- Understanding [Financial Aid Award Letters](#) helps students understand the types of financial aid there is and if they have to pay them back or not.
- [How to pay for college](#) compares the “Sticker Price” for colleges in Idaho and the ways to pay for college.
- [Paying for college](#) helps students search for scholarships and exposes them to the various ways to pay for college as well as applying for financial aid.
- [Nerd wallet](#) offers easy-to-understand information about borrowing and repayment, as well as a student-friendly loan calculator.
- The [Federal Student Aid](#) website contains several resources for students and families to learn about financial aid, including loan programs. [Download brochures](#) about all the [loan options available](#), eligibility & application requirements, and information about [Parent PLUS loans](#).

Section 6



College Signing Days

As a follow up to your successful College Application week in the fall, consider hosting a College Signing Day in the spring. This is a great way for you to check back in with your seniors to confirm that they have plans for college and have set all of the necessary wheels in motion (housing, orientation, enrollment/class scheduling) to get started in the fall. These events also continue the momentum you built in the fall, celebrate the success of your seniors, and get juniors excited about the year ahead.

While athletes who plan to play sports in college receive media attention when they sign with their college/university, all students deserve accolades and praise when they decide to further their education past high school. That may mean a professional training program, a community college, or a 4-year school.

While hosting a College Signing Day is optional, you can use all you learned about event planning to host another wonderful day at your school!

Appendix

The materials in this section are printed copies of on-line resources that you may find helpful. For current versions please see the resources section of the Idaho College Application Week Website at:

<http://gotocollege.idaho.gov>

Materials include:

- Overview for Teachers & Staff
- Family Letter Template
- Sample Press Release
- School Information Poster
- Sample Student Sign-in Sheet
- You've AppliedNow What?
- Sample Volunteer Recruitment Letter
- Volunteer Sign-In Sheet
- Sample Volunteer Thank You Letter
- College Application Information Sheet
- NACAC Application
- College Signing Day Placard
- College Signing Day Pledge

College Application Week

Overview for Teachers & Staff

Our school/organization is participating in Idaho's statewide College Application Week! To ensure that our event is a success for our students, we need your help in promoting and coordinating this event — and making sure our initiative is exciting and fun for our students, families, and community!

College Application Week is an event coordinated by The Office of the State Board of Education. Idaho College Application Week will be held during the Month of October in high schools throughout Idaho. College Application Week has been successfully implemented in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

What is the goal of College Application Week?

Our goal is to provide every graduating high school senior with the opportunity to apply to college. While much of the focus of College Application Week is geared toward first-generation college students, low-income students, and other students who face barriers to applying to college, we encourage all students, including freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, as well as seniors who have already applied to college, to participate in events to help them explore and prepare for postsecondary education, including certificate programs, two-year degrees, and four-year degrees.

How can I help?

You can help by assisting students in applying, contributing to the "spirit" of the week, or — perhaps most importantly — reaching out to students to encourage them to apply to college. Seek out those students who might traditionally be overlooked when it comes to college planning, and talk to them about their options for college. Be sure to ask students if they've applied as they board the bus, go through the lunch line, or walk into church, a store, or your classroom.

What happens during College Application Week?

Think of College Application Week as a school spirit week, during which we all work together to build excitement and awareness surrounding the college exploration and application process. High Schools will provide computer lab time to students to allow them to explore colleges and apply online, but the event becomes truly spectacular when we integrate fun activities into our school and community environments. For example, we can decorate our doors and classrooms in college themes, post signs and pennants in our community, decorate storefronts, have college trivia contests — let's get creative!

Sample Student/ Family Letter

This letter should be distributed to students and families in October. Feel free to add more event details to generate interest!

School Logo and/or Address

Date

Dear Students and Families,

The Office of the State Board of Education is pleased to announce College Application Week in Idaho. The week of **[INSERT DATES]**, high schools across the state will host events to assist students with the college application process. **[NAME OF SCHOOL]** will participate in Idaho's College Application Week, with the goal of ensuring that all members of our senior class apply to at least one two-year or four-year college or university program this fall.

The overarching goal of Idaho College Application Week is to provide an opportunity for all Idaho seniors to complete and file college applications. To us, college means any education program beyond high school including certificate programs, two-year degree programs, and four-year degree programs.

To be efficient when applying to college during College Application Week, students should view the Apply Idaho videos at this link <https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/apply-idaho/> and/or complete the College Application Worksheet we have attached to this letter. The video and College Application Worksheet have all the information students will need to complete an online application. We expect that students and their families may need to work together in gathering the information listed in the checklist.

Families are welcome to visit the school to assist their student during the application process. In addition, if you are interested in volunteering during the event, please let me know. Volunteers can greet and sign in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities.

If you have any questions, please call **[NAME]**, **[TITLE]**, at **[(000) 000-0000]**. You can also find more information about the initiative online at <http://www.gotocollege.idaho.gov/>. Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative to encourage Idaho's students to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,

[SCHOOL COUNSELOR/SITE COORDINATOR/PRINCIPAL]

Sample Press Release

School Logo or Letterhead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [name of site coordinator]

[school name]

[school address]

[phone number]

[email of contact person]

[high school website]

College Application Week to be held [Dates] at [Name of High School].

[Name of Your High School] will participate in College Application Week during the week of [dates].

As part of Idaho's college access initiative, [Name of Your High School] will work with its seniors [Your School's Event Dates and Times] to complete and submit online at least one college application.

The goal of the program is to get more students applying to colleges and universities early in their senior year.

[Name of Site Coordinator or School Principal], College Application Week event Site Coordinator/Principal for [Name of Your High School], expects more than [Insert Number] seniors to participate with the help of [Insert Number] volunteers from [Insert School Faculty, Administration, College, Community Resources That Will Help].

For more information: [INSERT WEBSITE LINK OR AN EMAIL ADDRESS] or

Contact: [NAME OF SITE COORDINATOR]

Phone: [PHONE NUMBER]

#



School Name				
CEEBS/School Code				
Phone Number				
Fax number				
Counselor Information	Full Name	Email Address		

Student Sign-in Sheet

Please use your legal name.

EDUID Unique Student Identifier	Legal First Name	Middle Initial/Name	Legal Last Name	Nickname	Which Schools did you submit applications to?

You've Applied.... Now What?

Applying to college is your first, step, but while the schools look over your application, here is a step-by-step guide of things for you to do in the meantime.

November:

- ☐ Create an FSA ID (<https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>)
- ☐ Fill out the FASFA (<https://fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm>)
- ☐ Hashtag #iappplied on your favorite social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- ☐ Explore saving for college with Idaho's 529 plan (<https://www.idsave.org/>)
- ☐ Apply for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship!
- ☐ Apply for on-campus housing (Contact the college's Residence Life Office)

December:

- ☐ Visit campuses and meet with admission counselors and professors
- ☐ Apply for school specific scholarships (Contact the college's Financial Aid Office)

January:

- ☐ Send a 7th Semester transcript to the schools you applied for (Keep your grades up!)

February:

- ☐ Register for an advanced registration event at the school of your choice
- ☐ Prepare for priority Financial aid deadlines (Usually Feb 15 or March 1)
- ☐ Fight senioritis! Your grades still count!

March:

- ☐ Return scholarship award letters to the college's Financial Aid Office
- ☐ Did you submit a housing application?

May:

- ☐ Request final high school transcript to be sent to the school of your choice
- ☐ If you took dual credit courses request and send college transcripts.
- ☐ Participate in your schools College Signing Day Activities

June:

- ☐ Graduate!
- ☐ Attend an orientation at your campus if you haven't been there already
- ☐ Enjoy your summer!

Sample Volunteer Recruitment Letter

This letter should be distributed to any volunteer prospects and/or groups. Feel free to add more event details to generate interest!

School Logo and/or Address

Date

Dear [NAME OF ORGANIZATION],

[NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION] is pleased to announce its participation in Idaho's College Application Week. In an effort to further expand college access initiatives College Application Week will be held at high schools throughout the state in October. The goal of College Application Week is to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college with a particular focus on helping first-generation low-income students, and students who may not otherwise apply to college.

College Application Week can open the door for students by encouraging them to take a significant step toward college in their senior year. What began in 2005 as a single day at one high school in North Carolina has evolved into a series of nationwide campaigns to help students. This year, Idaho is hosting a second year of pilot schools hosting events. Over 80 schools throughout Idaho will participate. A critical component of College Application Week is the one-on-one support provided by volunteers who help students fill out applications at school. Volunteers may include high school staff, registrars, and admissions officers from nearby postsecondary institutions, and representatives from the community.

We will be hosting our event on [DATE(S) AND TIME] and would welcome representatives from [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] to visit our school during this exciting and important time. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Our students would really appreciate your help and support as they take a big step toward going to college.

If you, or any of your colleagues at [NAME OF ORGANIZATION], are interested in working with [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL/CBO] in any capacity, please contact me no later than [DEADLINE].

Thank you!

[SITE COORDINATOR'S NAME]
[SITE COORDINATOR'S TITLE]
[SITE COORDINATOR CONTACT INFO]

Volunteer Sign-In Sheet

Name	Volunteer Location	Phone Number	Email

Sample Volunteer Thank You Letter

A thank you letter should be sent to all volunteers who assisted with your CAW event. Add more details or information to personalize your letter.

School Logo and/or Address

Date

Dear [VOLUNTEER'S NAME],

On behalf of [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL/CBO], I would like to personally thank you for volunteering your time at our Idaho College Application Week event. This event could not have been a success without your help and the help of many others who volunteered their time.

During Idaho College Application Week, [NUMBER OF SENIORS SUBMITTING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS] of our seniors submitted over [NUMBER OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED] college applications to colleges and universities across Idaho and the nation. 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/CBO] thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time at College Application Week! We look forward to seeing you throughout the school year and especially at our event next year.

Sincerely,

[SITE COORDINATOR'S NAME]
[SITE COORDINATOR'S TITLE]

College Application Information Sheet for Students

If you are interested in applying to a private college in Idaho or an out-of-state institution you may find this useful to gather the information you will need. If you are applying to an Idaho public college or university using Apply Idaho, you will need to know your EDUID, Date of Birth (DOB), and your Full Legal Name.

Student's Full Legal Name:

Social Security Number:

— —

If you are interested in going to a state supported college or university, tuition is generally different depending on whether you are a resident or a non-resident of that state. It will be important for you to know what each institution has requirements to determine residency.

Top three colleges and universities you wish to submit an application:

1.

Special requirements (essay, personal statement, residency, etc.):

Deadline for application:

 Cost to apply:

 Payment option:

Deadline for scholarship or institutional financial assistance:

2.

Special requirements (essay, personal statement, residency, etc.):

Deadline for application:

 Cost to apply:

 Payment option:

Deadline for scholarship or institutional financial assistance:

3.

Special requirements (essay, personal statement, residency, etc.):

Deadline for application:

 Cost to apply:

 Payment option:

Deadline for scholarship or institutional financial assistance:

If required by the institution you are applying to, it is strongly recommended that you write your essays and personal statements well in advance of College Application Week. Bring a final, proofed electronic copy on a flash drive.



Request for Admission Application Fee Waiver

SEND THIS FORM DIRECTLY TO THE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION

TO: DEAN/DIRECTOR OF ADMISSION AT

NAME OF COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

STUDENT: Print or type the information requested below. You must personally sign the Certification Statement.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I certify that I understand and meet all eligibility requirements to request an admission application fee waiver.

STUDENT'S NAME

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

STUDENT'S ADDRESS

CITY STATE

ZIP

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Print or type the information requested below and check the indicator(s) of economic need. You must personally sign the Certification Statement.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I certify that the student named on this form is currently enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade at this school and meets the indicator(s) of economic need checked below.

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL'S NAME

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL'S TITLE

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL'S EMAIL

NAME OF SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION

CEEB# OR PROGRAM#

ADDRESS

PHONE

ECONOMIC NEED: The student must meet at least one of the following indicators of economic need. If no item is checked, the request will be denied.

- ☐ Student has received or is eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver.
- ☐ Student is enrolled in or eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL).
- ☐ Student's annual family income falls within the income Eligibility Guidelines* set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
- ☐ Student is enrolled in a federal, state or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound).
- ☐ Student's family receives public assistance.
- ☐ Student lives in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or is homeless.
- ☐ Student is a ward of the state or an orphan.
- ☐ Other request from high school principal, high school counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader:
Given my knowledge of this student's family circumstances and after reviewing the eligibility guidelines, I believe that providing the application fee would present a hardship. Explanation:

*To view USDA Income Eligibility Guidelines for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program or review FAQs related to this form visit <http://bit.ly/NACACfeewaiver>.

#NextStepsIdaho
#CollegeSigningDay
#ReachHigher



I, _____

pledge to go to college!

I am planning to attend

#CollegeSigningDay
#ReachHigher
#NextStepsIdaho



I, _____

pledge to go to college!

I am planning to attend

#CollegeSigningDay
#ReachHigher
#NextStepsIdaho



I, _____

pledge to go to college!

I am planning to attend

#CollegeSigningDay
#ReachHigher
#NextStepsIdaho



I, _____

pledge to go to college!

I am planning to attend

#CollegeSigningDay
#ReachHigher
#NextStepsIdaho



Event Resource for New High School Counselors

Successful Practices

College Application Week (CAW)

Great Examples

Reach out to one of these schools for guidance.

- Eagle High School
- Kuna High School
- Meridian Academy
- Notus Jr./Sr. High School
- Post Falls High School
- Sandpoint High School

Prior to the Event

- Students are informed about what they are doing beforehand
- Tell students to come prepared with their Social Security Number
- Advertise your school's College Application Day/Week well in advance:
 - School website
 - Newsletter
 - Announcements
- Students should have an opportunity to explore college options beforehand
- Discussions with college reps
- Meetings with high school counselor
- Exploration of college websites

Access to Computer Labs

- Reserve computer labs early – most colleges no longer process paper applications, so computer/internet access is a must
- Troubleshoot for any login/connectivity issues

During the Event

Instructions during college application week are clear

- Display important dates and information near each work station or hang up around the room:
 - Graduation date
 - SAT test date
 - School address
 - FAFSA school code

Checklists are a good idea and keep students busy, engaged, and on-task

- Have steps to complete once a college application is submitted:
 - Apply for FSA ID
 - Apply for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship
 - Apply to a second college
- Consider having the following websites displayed so students can quickly navigate to Idaho college websites:
 - <http://iacrao.net/>
 - NextSteps.Idaho.gov
- Provide supplemental application materials for Admissions representatives (if/when possible):
 - Official copies of 6th semester transcripts
 - ACT/SAT test scores
 - NACAC Fee Waiver forms for students who qualify (not all colleges waive the application fee during CAW)
- If supplemental application materials cannot be provided:
 - Students sign out by listing the schools they applied to so counselor knows
 - where to send transcript
 - If students qualify for fee waivers, provide college reps with a list of students

Create a college-going atmosphere to help with student buy-in

- Require all seniors to complete at least one college application
- Incentivize – raffle drawings, class prizes, food
- Parent support – send info in newsletters and advertise event on school website
- Teacher support – shown when seniors are let out during class (English or Government) to complete their college applications
- Celebration posters/bulletin boards:
 - Take pictures of students standing next to the CAW pop-up banners after they completed an application
 - Create a collage to be displayed proudly in the hallways

Successful Practices

FAFSA Completion Nights

- Advertise the event well in advance:
 - School website, newsletters, announcements, etc.
 - Lots of reminders leading up to the event
- Reserve a computer lab early
- Incentivize:
 - FAFSA Night in conjunction with a college night/dinner
 - Raffle drawings for prizes:
 - Colleges can donate promotional items
 - Dutch Bros. gift cards are always a big hit
- Tell students and parents to come prepared with social security numbers and tax info
- Provide lots of FAFSA helpers/volunteers - College representatives are happy to help!

College Fairs

- Need multiple colleges in attendance
- Inform other small high schools in the area to invite their students
- Provide food when possible (everybody likes free food)
- Advertise to college reps and students early so everyone can plan ahead and mark their calendars – makes your event a priority for everyone

Less Effective Practices

College Application Week

- Events where students are not provided written instruction – tough to keep them on task
- Events where students are called out of class one or a few at a time – works best to call out whole groups during class time
- FAFSA nights that are not advertised well – attendance is low

College Fairs – please avoid...

- Scheduling during sporting events
- Scheduling during lunch when upperclassman are allowed to leave campus
- Inviting unaccredited colleges to fairs (regionally accredited institutions do not accept transfer credits from Stevens-Henager, Brown Mackie, etc.)