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## **SITE COORDINATOR MANUAL**



**Ohio** CollegeApplication**Month**



## **Welcome to the American College Application Campaign**

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

This manual gives an overview of American College Application Campaign and particularly its efforts to assist states and U.S. territories as each implements a College Application Month event. This manual is intended for high school site coordinators, typically school counselors or assistant principals, as they plan and implement a College Application Month event at their school.

This manual has been updated by your state's designated State Coordinators to reflect the implementation of the College Application Month in your state. For any questions regarding the information included in this document, please contact your State Coordinators.

The ACAC initiative began in 2005, in a single GEAR UP North Carolina high school in Chatham County. Since that time, the program has expanded statewide in North Carolina with every district and over 470 high schools participating annually. Since 2008, the number of states implementing a College Application program has been growing. In 2013, ACAC took place in over 2,500 schools in 39 states and the District of Columbia. Over 153,000 students submitted almost 220,000 college applications during 2013 College Application programs. Beginning in 2014, ACAC programs took place in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As of the 2020 campaign year, over 3.6 million students have been served, submitting over 5.8 million college applications since the campaign's inception in 2005. This manual highlights the most effective practices of participating states.

We hope you find this guide useful as you implement strategies to achieve increased college access in your school.

## Joining the American College Application Campaign

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC), an effort of the American Council on Education (ACE), is a national initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The purpose is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits at least one admissions application.

The Campaign is conducted state by state and is typically held in early November. However, there may be variations to the scheduled week in order to accommodate state-specific needs. Ohio College Application Month (OCAM) will be held October 1 to November 15, 2021.



Ohio College Application Month is an official program of the American College Application Campaign, sponsored by the American Council on Education. [Learn more about the program in all 50 states.](#)

## HOW DO I GET STARTED?

OCAM is most successful with a committed site coordinator (or two), typically a high school counselor or assistant principal, who will be responsible for implementing the program locally. As with most things, a successful OCAM event is about being prepared. This handbook and the additional resources are designed to help you and your students be as prepared as possible for your event.



## WHO IS OHIO COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH FOR?

Everyone! The goal of OCAM is to increase the number of low-income and first-generation students applying to colleges and universities. However we know the events are helpful for all types of students. When we say “college” we mean all formal education or training after high school. This means that your OCAM event is just as important for the students planning to begin an apprenticeship as it is for students applying to a four year university.



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**WHEN YOU REGISTER TO BE AN OCAM SITE, YOU AGREE TO BE INCLUSIVE BY:**

- Hosting a program during the school day that is open to any student interested in applying with a focus on engaging first-generation students, low-income students, and students who may otherwise not apply to college.
- Identifying and convening a school team comprised of staff and community members.
- Leveraging support of the school team to ensure that students are prepared to participate in the event (essays are completed prior to the program, students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.).
- Engaging the local community, families, and others through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising the program.
- Creating a college-going culture within the school through a variety of approaches. Some suggestions are included in this guide.
- Collecting data as requested by the State Coordinators including, but not limited to, the number of students participating and the number of applications submitted.
- Following-up with students after the event to ensure applications submitted are complete (transcripts, college entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, submitting a complete FAFSA, etc.).



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## OHIO COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH SITE COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

- REGISTER
  - Sign up to be an official OCAM site
    - Visit [www.ohiohighered.org/3TGR-4TG/application](http://www.ohiohighered.org/3TGR-4TG/application) to register as an OCAM site.
- THINK AHEAD
  - Recruit your OCAM team. Include a variety of people who will help plan and host your event including administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students.
  - Decide on a date to hold your event.
  - Decide the format for your event.
    - You might choose drop-in hours or scheduled class visits. You might focus on community college applications one day, public universities the next, and private and out-of-state colleges after that. You might ask college admissions staff to present to your students or have on-site admissions. It's your call! Decide what works best for your students and community.
  - Plan school wide activities to help make your event useful and fun.
- GET READY
  - Review the Site Coordinator Handbook and materials.
    - Contact us with any questions at [ocam@highered.ohio.gov](mailto:ocam@highered.ohio.gov).
    - Reserve the space where you plan to hold the OCAM event.
    - Add OCAM to your school/organization calendar.
    - Visit [www.ohiohighered.org/3TGR-4TG/application](http://www.ohiohighered.org/3TGR-4TG/application) for access to resources you can use to host a successful campaign.
- SPREAD THE WORD
  - Distribute the OCAM Overview for Teachers and Staff. Encourage them to participate in your activities & allow students to attend your events, and ask if they have additional ideas for ways to add college knowledge and readiness to their classes.
  - Tell students and families about your event. Send a Student and Family Letter home.
  - Request a proclamation of Ohio College Application Month from your major or city council.
  - Join the national #whyapply campaign on social media. Tell the world why students should apply to your alma mater, the local university, or postsecondary education in general. Challenge your friends and colleagues to do it, too.
- RECRUIT HELP
  - Request college gear, gift certificates, or other fun items from area colleges and local businesses. Use these for door prizes during your event.

- Recruit volunteers from the school and community. Volunteers can help before and after the event. They can assist with setting up, checking students in, and answering questions while students complete their applications.
- Work with your school's counseling staff to identify students who haven't applied to college yet.
  - Send them special invitations to participate in your OCAM event.
- Share your detailed OCAM schedule, including any special activities, with teachers and school staff. Ask which elements they want to participate in or help with.

### **ONE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT**

- Send a reminder home for students and families. Include suggestions of ways parents/guardians can help their senior prepare for the event.
- Send a press release to your local media. Consider inviting them to send a reporter to cover the event.
- Make an announcement to remind students that the event is next week and remind them that they will need to:
  - Know where they would like to apply.
  - Have a plan for application fees and to speak with school counselor if they believe they qualify for a fee waiver.
  - Write required essays or personal statements, have them proofed, in a final version, and bring to the event on a flash drive or as an email attachment that they can access.
  - Gather the information needed to complete applications. Some information may need to come from parents (e.g., residency information, Social Security number).
- Make final preparations for your event.
- Encourage school staff to wear college clothing on the days of the event.
- Send volunteers a reminder about the event a day or two prior to your event.
- Place a reminder about the event of your school's website homepage.

### **ENJOY YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH EVENT**

- Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support!
  - Let them know what their role is for the day; ensure they receive a badge or sticker identifying them as a volunteer. Templates and recommended volunteer tasks are in the Sample Materials document at [www.ohiohighered.org/3TGR-4TG/application](http://www.ohiohighered.org/3TGR-4TG/application).
- Students should register for their FAFSA PIN during or shortly following your event.
- Participating students should complete their online Student Survey and "sign-out" of the event, providing the requested information. Ensure students get the "What's Next" handout and information about the state's FAFSA Completion Day upon sign-out.
- Site coordinators and volunteers should complete requested online surveys.

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## AFTER YOUR EVENT

- Submit any requested data to your State Coordinators by the Friday of the week following your College Application Month.
- Communicate the program's impact with the local media.
- Thank your volunteers.
- Follow-up with school team to share your success!

Congratulations – you've hosted your OCAM event! How'd it go? Take some time to evaluate your event. Did you meet your goals? What went well? What can you improve for next year? What follow-up do you still need to do with students?

Complete the Coordinator Survey. This helps us continue to build the case for hosting this program across the state – and it lets us show off your great work to our colleagues around the country!

Consider what's next. Applying to college is just one of the steps in helping students to step foot on campus in the fall. They'll also need help with paying for college, deciding where to go, and then actually getting there. Host Ohio FAFSA Completion Initiative (FAFSA Campaign) events to help.