# DC College Application and Exploration Month

## A Partner of the
## American College Application Campaign

SITE COORDINATOR RESOURCE GUIDE
Updated in 2017

A Guide to Planning, Promoting, and Hosting
College Application and Exploration Month Events

*To download a copy of this guide, visit:* http://osse.dc.gov/service/dc-college-application-and-exploration-month

# A MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Thank you for agreeing to host DC College Application and Exploration Month at your school or community-based organization.  Your involvement will ensure the success of DC College Application and Exploration Month.

**Explore. Plan. Apply!**
The main goal of this initiative is to provide every graduating high school senior with the preparation, opportunity, and support needed to apply to college. A month-long scope will allow students to do more than just submit an application. Applying is only one step of the college application process. With this time frame, students can participate in the process at their own pace -- and schools and community-based organizations can align this initiative with the many college exploration activities that are already taking place in the fall of the academic year.

This guide gives site coordinators the basic tools to plan, promote, and host successful DC College Application and Exploration Month events.  Please be sure to complete these important tasks:

1. Schedule time in the computer lab or other appropriate space during November to allow students the opportunity to explore colleges and to submit college applications. Make sure they are using My College Fact Finder to help in their search.

2. With a focus on underrepresented students, invite all seniors at your school to participate and make efforts to ensure that every senior who has not already completed a college application this year submits at least one college application by the end of the month.

3. Review the Activities List (page 11) and Promotional Ideas List (pages 18-19). Integrate these activities into your programming. Notify your school or organization's personnel about the event(s) and how they can be involved.

4. To make your event(s) run smoothly, you will need help from volunteers from colleges, your school and the community. Please consider your volunteer needs and how you will utilize them.

Visit DC College Application and Exploration Month or The College Ready DC Google Drive
 for additional resources and tools to build a college-going culture at your school.

Keep up-to-date with district-wide efforts by reading all DC College Application and Exploration Month emails. Regular updates to the Google Drive are designed to inform site coordinators and build support for the project.

On behalf of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the DC College Application and Exploration Month Steering Committee, thank you for all of the effort and time that you have committed to make this month a success. Your involvement will help District of Columbia students and families learn more about their options for college and pursue the dream of completing postsecondary education.  Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about DC College Application and Exploration Month.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. Background Information

## 2. Planning Your Events

**Toolkit Items:**
   a.   Site Coordinator Planning Checklist
   b.   Ask Me About It! Poster
   c.   College Bingo
   d.   Online Scavenger Hunt

## 3. Recruiting and Organizing Volunteers

**Toolkit Items:**
   e.   Volunteer or Donation Request Letter (Template)
   f.   Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members
   g.   Volunteer Reference Guide (Template)
   h.   Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

## 4. Promoting and Generating Excitement

**Toolkit Items:**
   i.   Press Release (Template)
   j.    Follow-Up Press Release (Template)
   k.   Student/Family Letter (Template)
   l.   College Knowledge Month Flyer (Template)

## 5. Working with Students

**Toolkit Items:**
    m.  Student Sign-In Sheet

## 6. Data Collection

## 7. Toolkit Library

These are individual documents that can be downloaded from the DC College Application and Exploration Month website or printed from this guide and used for programming at individual sites.

**Toolkit Items:**
    a.  Site Coordinator Planning Checklist
    b.  Ask Me About it! Poster
    c.  College Bingo
    d.  Online Scavenger Hunt

    e.  Volunteer or Donation Request Letter (Template)
    f.  Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members
    g.  Volunteer Reference Guide (Template)
    h.  Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

    i.  Press Release (Template)
    j.  Follow-Up Press Release (Template)
    k.  Student/Family Letter (Template)
    l.  DC College Application and Exploration Month Flyer

    m.  Student Sign-In Sheet (Template)

# SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Are you new to DC College Application and Exploration Month? This section provides a brief overview of what it means for your school or community-based organization to participate as an official DC College Application and Exploration Month site.

## In this section:

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## What is DC College Application and Exploration Month?

DC College Application and Exploration Month encourages students to take a significant step toward college by providing assistance and building excitement for the application process. Sponsored by a network of secondary, postsecondary and community partners, the objectives of this initiative include:

- Help schools and community-based organizations establish and/or build upon a culture of college readiness and support students as they explore college options and apply to college.
- Communicate to all students the importance of preparing for and applying to college.
- Engage and inform underrepresented students (first-generation college students, low-income, and those that otherwise may not apply) about postsecondary opportunities, culminating in the application process.
- Provide a district-wide message and excitement about exploring and planning for college.
- Increase the number of District of Columbia seniors who complete the college admissions process.

Historically, the initiative took place for one week in November. With this new time frame, students can participate in the college application process at their own pace and schools can align this initiative with many of the college exploration activities that traditionally take place in the fall.

## Background Information

DC College Application and Exploration Month is part of a larger, national effort coordinated by the American Council on Education, to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The District of Columbia piloted its first campaign in 2012, as DC College Application Week. The initiative was designed to provide an opportunity for high schools, community-based organizations and postsecondary institutions to collaborate in a concentrated effort to engage, inform and support students with the college exploration and application process. In addition to the District of Columbia, a total of 50 states across the nation will participate in the campaign this year. Several states have expanded their efforts to include month-long programming.

### Growth

DC College Application and Exploration Month has grown significantly since the 2012 pilot year when seven high schools participated. In its fourth year, there were 46 host sites, including 30 high school sites, three middle school sites, ten community-based organizations and three postsecondary education sites. This was an increase from 24 high school sites in 2014.

### More than Numbers

In addition to engaging and informing students about the postsecondary process, DC College Application and Exploration Month gives schools an opportunity to establish or build upon a culture of college. It promotes ongoing discussions and partnerships among members of many professional organizations and agencies that serve a variety of stakeholders in the K-12 and higher education communities. The energy and collaboration surrounding this initiative reflect the commitment of many residents of Washington, DC to ensure equitable pathways to higher education for all of our students.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Why was DC College Application Week changed to DC College Application and Exploration Month?**
A month-long effort will allow students to do more than just submit an application. Applying is only *one step* of the college application process – the result of thoughtful exploration and planning. Within this expanded time frame, students can participate in the application process at their own pace -- and find the best college fit for them. Counselors and high school staff will have more time to draft recommendations, secure transcripts and/or fee waivers and support underrepresented students. High schools and community-based organizations can build upon or establish a college-going culture by utilizing the college exploration activities that already take place in the fall of the academic year.

**What are the expectations for participating schools or community-based organizations and site coordinators?**
Your DC College Application and Exploration Month event(s) can occur any time during the month of November - schools are not required to participate in the entire month. Participating schools or community-based organizations are expected to devote time and space during regular operating hours for college exploration activities – including support for seniors to complete college applications. Schools and community-based sites are encouraged, but not required, to integrate other college exploration events into the month – such as essay writing workshops or a parent night. New schools should start small and build on what works well. Returning schools should expand on successes they have had in the past.

**What support will participating schools and site coordinators receive?**
The DC College Application and Exploration Month steering committee will provide resources, materials, a volunteer database, support and webinar training for registered sites to assist with their programming.

**Support Resource Timeline:**
**Oct. 1** - Volunteer Registration Opens
Volunteers will be available to sites that request volunteer assistance.
**Oct. 11** – Site Coordinator Resource Manual available online.
**Oct. 11** – Site Coordinator Training Webinar available online.
**Oct. 23 - 31** - DC College Application and Exploration Month promotional material
delivery. Site Coordinators will be notified of their delivery date via email.

## Questions?
Tiffany DeJesus, DC College Application Month, District Coordinator | (202) 741-6415 or Tiffany.DeJesus@dc.gov

# SECTION 2: PLANNING YOUR EVENTS

This section is designed to assist you in planning and implementing your DC College Application and Exploration Month event(s). DC College Application and Exploration Month events can be as big as your imagination will allow. With proper planning, event promotion, and creativity, your DC College Application and Exploration Month will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school.  This section provides a list of important dates to engage students in college awareness activities during and after November, lists of resources and ideas, and general event reminders.

## In this section:

**Toolkit Items:**
  a.  Site Coordinator Planning Checklist
  b.  Ask Me About it!
  c.  College Bingo Activity
  d.  Online Scavenger Hunt

## November College Application and Exploration Dates

During your planning process, consider using the **Planning Calendar** as a reference guide.  Download a blank planning calendar and customize as you see fit.

The **National Association of College Admissions Counselors** (NACAC) Washington DC National College Fair will be held Nov. 5, 2017 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Beginning Oct. 1, your students will be able to fill out the FAFSA. (In the past, they had to wait until Jan. 1). In addition, applicants will no longer need to estimate income and tax information and will be able to retrieve their data directly from the IRS, right from the first day the FAFSA is available. Students also will have information about their Expected Family Contributions (EFC) earlier, helping them as they're going through the college application and selection process.

*The information transferred from the IRS DRT will not be visible on the SAR and only on the ISIR. The EFC will still be visible. For more information visit **www.fafsa.gov**.*

## Site Coordinator Resources and Support

Planning Calendar



Site Coordinator Resource Guide- This guide is meant to be a primary resource to you as you plan, promote and implement your DC College Application and Exploration Month activities.

Pre-recorded Training Webinar and PowerPoint- Updated in 2015. Site Coordinators can access the DC College Application and Exploration training for new and returning site coordinators.

2017 List of Participating Postsecondary Institutions - A list of postsecondary education institutions that accept the College Board fee waiver or waive fees during DC College Application and Exploration Month

**Toolkit Items**

These are individual documents that can be downloaded and used for programming at individual sites. They are grouped by category and are referenced in this guide. Items with an asterisk are customizable (templates).

**Planning Your Events**

Site Coordinator Planning Checklist (template)*

Ask Me About It!

College Bingo Activity

Online Scavenger Hunt

**Recruiting and Organizing Volunteers**

Volunteer or Donation Request Letter  (template)*
An Overview for Teachers/Staff/Community
Volunteer Reference Guide (template)*
Volunteer Thank You Letter (template)*

**Promoting the Month**

Press Release (template)*

Follow-up Press Release (template)*

Student/Family Letter (template)*
DC College Application and Exploration Month Flyer
(template)*

**Working with Students**

 Student Sign-in Sheet*
NACAC Eligibility and FAQs
NACAC Application Fee Waiver
Senior Resource Guide (2015 Edition)
Senior Application Information Worksheet
College Application Worksheet
College Comparison Worksheet
Teacher Recommendation Request
I Applied..Now What
What You Need to the File the FAFSA

## Activities List

In addition to working with seniors on applications in the computer lab, there are a variety of activities you can implement during DC College Application and Exploration Month to engage the whole school or organization. Consider adding one or more of these activities to your schedule of events.

**Coordinate Homeroom Workshops**
Conduct workshops during homeroom with students throughout DC College Application and Exploration Month. 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 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, application essay writing, finding the right college using **My College Fact Finder** , etc.

**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 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.

**Conduct "Trial Runs" in Classes**
Complete a **sample** application (not for actual submission) with students. Teachers can go over the correct grammar and language to use on a college application. Stress the importance of using appropriate email addresses. It should sound professional and provide a good impression of the student. English teachers can incorporate writing college and scholarship essays into their class curriculum.

Encourage students to research a college major that they think they might be interested in pursuing. Have them identify which colleges offer the major, what type of job/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.

**Incorporate Ask Me About It! (page 15)**
This activity is a simple way to get all students engaged in dialogue with school staff regarding college access and preparation. Ask all staff to participate by completing the Ask Me About It! poster (toolkit, b) and hanging it outside of their classroom/office during the week – or all year.

## General Event Reminders

1. Check all computers and make sure that no pertinent websites are blocked by your school or community-based organization.

2. Make sure you have copies of the most up-to-date 2017 List of Participating Postsecondary Institutions. It would be a good idea to download and open this list on each computer so students can access college websites and admission pages. To access this document, go to www.osse.dc.gov/service/dc-college-application-and-exploration-month

3. Provide a hand-out explaining to students how they can obtain transcripts and fee waivers at your school.

4. Post the following items in each computer lab or classroom where students will be completing online applications. Students may need to reference this information when completing applications.

   - **School mailing address**
   - **Phone number**
   - **Fax number**
   - **School code**
   - **Counselor contact information, including email address**
   - **Past and upcoming SAT and ACT dates**

5. Have seniors sign in as they arrive. Refer to the Student Sign-in Sheet (toolkit, m).

6. Make sure students know or have their Social Security Number.

7. Distribute any hand-outs you think would be helpful for students to reference during and after the application process (toolkit, m-t).

8. After your students have completed their college applications:

   - Remind each student to review the hand-outs you provide.

   - Distribute stickers and *I Applied...Now What?* Hand-out to students who have applied to college.

   - Encourage students to Visit StudentAid.gov/fafsa to find out how to fill out the FAFSA and create their FSA ID, what information is needed for the FAFSA, what the deadlines are, and what happens after the FAFSA.

     o Also, remind students of the next FAFSA completion event at the local high school or in the community where students and families have the opportunity to receive free, confidential assistance completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

9. CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS!  Recognize the hard work you, your staff, your volunteers, and your students have done this month

# Ask Me About it - Activity

**Purpose**
- To identify staff members by their institutions of higher education.
- To engage students in dialogue with faculty and staff members regarding college access, college preparation, application, etc.

**Activities**
- Have the entire faculty and staff display the Ask Me About It poster (toolkit, b) that lists alma maters (colleges and/or universities where they completed degrees) outside of their classroom or office during the month and the remainder of the school year.
- Announce the posting date to the school and set aside some time (i.e. during homeroom/advisory period) and allow students to scavenger hunt for as many different schools as they can find, the school farthest away, the school with the most alumni, etc. Award small prizes or recognition.
- Celebrate any updates throughout the year.

**Preparation**
- E-mail the Ask Me about It Poster to all faculty and staff and designate a posting date.

# SECTION 3: RECRUITING AND ORGANIZING VOLUNTEERS

Reaching out to community groups and members for your DC College Application and Exploration Month efforts is an effective way to create or maintain a college-going culture at your school or community-based organization. The community plays an important role in creating and sustaining a college-going culture. In addition to volunteers who are experts in the field, there are other people in your school and local community who might be willing to help with your DC College Application and Exploration Month events.

In the following pages, you will find ideas for engaging, utilizing and communicating with volunteers.

## In this section:
**Toolkit Items:**
   c.  Volunteer or Donation Request Letter (Template)
   d.  Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members
   e.  Volunteer Reference Guide (Template)
   f.  Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

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## Whom to Involve

**DC College Application and Exploration Month Volunteers**
The DC College Application and Exploration Month steering committee will assist with volunteer needs by recruiting college admissions representatives, higher education practitioners, and other community personnel who can lend their support and technical expertise during your activities.

**To receive access to a list of volunteers, please notify OSSE of your volunteers needs any time after Oct. 1.**

In addition to their contact information, volunteers will indicate their area of expertise, and their availability. Site coordinators should contact these volunteers as soon as possible to communicate their event needs. Their availability is first-come, first-served.

**Students**
Recruit students to help implement DC College Application and Exploration Month. Identify student leaders from each grade who would love to bring their own ideas to the table.  Select student helpers from each grade and educate them about DC College Application and Exploration Month.  Ask them to share implementation ideas and post and distribute materials. Or, students who have already completed their application(s) could help other students during the week as "college application ambassadors."

Recruit seniors to mentor freshmen, sophomores, and/or juniors on preparing for postsecondary education. Senior mentors can meet with assigned freshmen, sophomores, or juniors during DC College Application and Exploration Month or recruit them to assist during the week.

 Ask students to promote the event through their Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter accounts.

**Teachers**
Teachers are your greatest allies in motivating students to pursue higher education. Share the calendar with them and ask for their help in brainstorming ways to make this event something the whole school or community organization embraces.

Ask teachers to incorporate college-planning and exploration activities into their classes leading up to DC College Application and Exploration Month.  Examples include lessons on paying for college and calculating a return on investment in math class, or writing college or scholarship application essays in English class.

Encourage teachers to decorate their classrooms and doors with college pennants, posters, and information. (With leadership's permission), ask teachers to wear their favorite college gear during DC College Application and Exploration Month.

**School Staff and Support Personnel**
Successful DC College Application and Exploration Month sites often get the whole school and community involved.  Encourage your school or community organization's staff, including custodians, cooks, administrative assistants, and bus drivers to wear college gear, post signs and information about DC College Application and Exploration Month, and to encourage students with whom they interact to apply or engage in the college process.

**Community Representatives**
Community involvement is crucial to the success of your event. Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your DC College Application and Exploration Month event(s) a success by either donating time and/or resources. Community members can serve as volunteers, provide prizes, or simply distribute information through their businesses or organizations.  The presence of community members in your school can lend weight and excitement to the initiative and showcase your community's dedication to promoting student success.  Groups to consider include:
- School alumni
- Students' families, the PTA/O, the School Improvement/Site Council
- Retired educators
- Community service, senior citizen, or religious organizations
- College and university representatives and faculty
- Business, community, and political leaders
- Youth programs (e.g. YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, sports programs, Girl and Boy Scout troops)
- TRIO program or DC College Access Program (DCCAP) personnel

## Volunteer Coordination

- Send all potential volunteers and/or groups a <u>Volunteer Request Letter</u> (toolkit, e) with a copy of <u>An Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members</u> (toolkit, f).

- Consider how you will utilize your volunteers. It is important for them to feel useful, active, and engaged. Identify specific responsibilities for your volunteers. For example, you may create shifts for greeting, sign-in, computer lab, other activities, etc.

- Follow your school or organization's security policy. Once you have received your volunteer sign-ups, remember to allow for enough time to conduct any necessary background checks, if required.

- Communicate with volunteers early and often. Create a system such as an e-mail distribution list or regular updates via text message. Be sure to contact all volunteers ahead of time to provide them with specifics such as a schedule, parking information, when to arrive, where the event will be held, options for lunch, etc.

- Finalize a volunteer list and, as a reminder, send information notifying volunteers of the event schedule and details <u>one week prior</u> to the event.

- If possible, check-in with and confirm volunteer participation <u>a day or two before</u> they will be at your site (via phone call or email).

- Provide name tags for volunteers on the day of the event.

- Conduct a quick orientation, perhaps the morning of the event, to familiarize volunteers on the details of your event.

- Provide volunteers with a <u>Volunteer Reference Guide</u> (toolkit, g).

- Make sure to thank all volunteers for their help during DC College Application and Exploration Month! Refer to the <u>Volunteer Thank You Letter</u> (toolkit, h).

# SECTION 4: PROMOTING AND GENERATING EXCITEMENT

Your DC College Application and Exploration event(s) can be as big as your imagination will allow. With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your DC College Application and Exploration Month will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school.

The following pages provide promotional ideas and publicity materials to get everyone excited about your college exploration and awareness events during DC College Application and Exploration Month.

## In this section:

**Toolkit Items:**
   i.   Press Release (Template)
   j.   Follow-Up Press Release (Template)
   k.   Student/Family Letter (Template)
   l.   DC College Application and Exploration Month Flyer (Template)

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## Promotional Ideas List

### Get the Word Out

Use daily PA announcements to generate awareness of DC College Application and Exploration Month activities at your school or community-based organization. If your school has a morning news program, coordinate with the producers to feature a countdown or a fun fact each morning leading up to the event. Coordinate interviews with students who plan to attend/participate in the event. Sample PA announcement:

> *By the year 2020, 76% percent of all jobs in the District of Columbia will require some postsecondary education. The more you learn, the more you'll earn. That's why our school (or program) is participating in DC College Application and Exploration Month.*

> *DC College Application and Exploration Month is happening during the month of November – and it's your opportunity to learn more about your options for education and training beyond high school. Freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors, you can explore certificate programs, two-year degree programs, and four-year degree programs. Seniors, if you haven't already applied to college, DC College Application and Exploration Month is a great opportunity to take control of your future and apply!*

Student newspapers are also a great place to highlight the event. Encourage student writers to feature stories.

Send a Press Release (toolkit, i) to alert local newspapers and TV stations about your event(s).

### Host a College "Prep Rally"

Talk with your school or community-based program 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 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 class contest between the different grades to inspire all students to take the college preparation process seriously during DC College Application and Exploration Month. Classes can compete against each other to design the best "College Application Wall," or come up with the best idea to promote DC College Application and Exploration Month and college awareness.

**Dress the Part**

During DC College Application and Exploration Month, 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 work spaces.

**Decorate the School**

Make sure to hang copies of the DC College Application and Exploration Month Flyer (toolkit, l) and the Planning Calendar throughout your school to publicize DC College Application and Exploration Month

**College**

Create a "College Wall." Encourage seniors to write the names of the colleges to which they have applied on banners or strips of construction paper to hang in a main hallway. Highlight college names when acceptances are received. If available, enlist the support of art teachers, as they may be helpful in developing additional promotional materials.

**Give Away College Gear**

Hold drawings and coordinate contests during DC College Application and Exploration Month. Ask colleges and universities to donate promotional items (banners, hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) and business to provide donations that graduating seniors can use in college (e.g. microwaves, coffee pots, bedding, gas cards) to use as giveaways during your event.

**Communicate!**

Send letters or email reminders to all parents, students, and school or community organization staff. Also include information in the school newsletter. You can use the Student/Family Letter (toolkit, k) as a guide.

# SECTION 5: WORKING WITH STUDENTS

The following pages provide general instructions and support for working with students on college exploration and applications during DC College Application and Exploration Month. Several hand-outs are included that students may find helpful as they navigate through the process of planning, exploring and applying for colleges – including the next steps after submitting an application.

## In this section:

**Toolkit Items:**

m.  Student Sign-In Sheet
n.  NACAC Eligibility and FAQs
o.  NACAC Application Fee Waiver
p.  Senior Resource Guide (2015 Edition)
q.  Senior Application Information Worksheet
r.  College Application Worksheet
s.  College Comparison Worksheet
t.  Teacher Recommendation Request
u.  I Applied..Now What
v.  What You Need to File the FAFSA

## Preparing Seniors to Complete Applications

**Encourage students to complete college research prior to starting their application(s).**
To help ensure students are able to make the most of their DC College Application and Exploration Month experience, students should arrive to the computer lab with a list of colleges that they have determined would be a good match for them and to which they would like to apply.  Encourage school or community-based organization staff to incorporate college research into their interactions with seniors. Additionally, consider developing a worksheet or using an online college search tool to help guide students through the process of researching colleges:

- www.mcff.osse.dc.gov
- www.collegeresults.org
- www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator
- www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?navid=gh-cp

College characteristics students should be encouraged to consider include:

- Location
- Size
- Available majors
- Available financial aid as well as the average net price
- Admissions requirements
- Characteristics of incoming freshman class
- Graduation rate

**Have seniors complete the** Senior Information for Applications worksheet
This document will help ensure students have the information needed to complete an application for college admission.

**Provide students with information about the Common Application.**
Make sure students know if a college they are considering accepts or requires the Common Application instead of a school-specific application. If students plan to complete the Common Application during the event, they will need to do their research and prepare for it ahead of time because it is typically longer and more detailed than other applications.

## Application Fees and Fee Waivers

With the average college application fee now around $41 applying to several colleges can be expensive for any student—and prohibitive for some families. Let your students and their parents know that they may be eligible for fee waivers. Students who are eligible for fee waivers for the standard college entrance tests are usually eligible for application fee waivers as well. Encourage students to talk with their school counselor well in advance of DC College Application and Exploration Month to discuss need and availability.

In addition to fee waivers, a number of schools offer free online and/or paper applications year-round.  Some local and regional colleges and universities have agreed to waive fees during DC College Application and Exploration Month. A list has been compiled of all colleges and universities waiving application fees during DC College Application and Exploration Month and will be updated periodically if an institution agrees to waive their fees during DC College Application and Exploration Month.  Site Coordinators are encouraged to check this list regularly and share it with seniors. While we ask colleges well in advance to consider waiving their fees, some are unable to agree to participate until a week or two before the event. All site coordinators should download the most current list on Oct.31, 2017 and print copies to prepare for DC College Application and Exploration events during the month of November.

**Application Fee Waivers Based on Financial Need**
Waivers of admission application fees for students with a demonstrated financial need and for whom an application fee would create an undue burden are provided at many public and private colleges and universities in DC, Maryland and Virginia. Application fee waivers due to financial hardship are provided to ensure that no student is deprived of the opportunity to pursue admission to the institution(s) of their choice.

## NACAC Fee Waiver Form

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) provides a form called the Request for Application Fee Waiver to be completed by students with the help of their high school counselor. This document, which you can download from the **NACAC site**, is updated annually.

- Download and print the **NACAC Request for Admission Application Fee Waiver**

Suggested annual family income guidelines for this waiver range from $29,900 to $46,000, depending on family size. However, income is not the only determining factor in application fee waivers; many are based on the counselor's personal knowledge of family circumstances.

**Students are eligible to use the NACAC fee waiver form if:**

- 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 and Reduced Price Meals program (FARMs).
- 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 student 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.

Gap year students, transfer students or individuals choosing to defer applying to college rather than immediately transitioning after high school graduation are not eligible to use NACAC's Request for Application Fee Waiver Form. NACAC recommends that prospective students in these categories contact the admission office of the institution(s) to which they are seeking admission regarding an institutional fee waiver.

**Requirements for completing the form:**

- Students must complete the student section in its entirety.
- The student's secondary school counselor, independent counselor or TRIO representative must verify that the student is eligible to use the form.
- The high school's raised seal or stamp must be included on the form.
- The form must be mailed **directly** to the admission office of the college or university to which the student is seeking admission.

## NACAC Fee Waiver- Frequently Asked Questions

**How many fee waiver requests may I submit?**
The Application for Fee Waiver Request Form is intended to be used at the schools to which a student is most interested in attending. NACAC recommends limiting the use of the form to no more than four (4) schools. If the Request for Application Fee Waiver is not accepted by the college or university, the student must pay the application fee.

**Does my school counselor need to sign the fee waiver form?**
Yes. A secondary school counselor, Independent Counselor or TRIO representative must verify that the student is qualified to use the form.

**My counselor is not a NACAC member; can I still use the form?**
Although not required, it is preferable that the form is used by a NACAC member or member institution.

**Where do I mail the form?**
Mail the Fee Waiver Form directly to the admission office of the institution to which you are applying, even if you applied to the school online.

**Is the school seal required?**
Yes, the school seal or an official business card of the counselor is required to verify the information is accurate.

**Is there a directory of colleges/universities who accept the forms? Does every school accept the form?** NACAC does not maintain a directory of institutions that accept the fee waiver form. Each institution reserves the right to accept or decline the request form. Some institutions have their own institutional application fee waivers as well.

**What happens if I apply to a school and they do not accept the NACAC fee waiver?**
Each institution makes the final decision to accept or decline fee waiver forms. If a fee waiver is declined, the student will be asked, by the institution, to pay the application fee.

## College Board Fee Waiver Form

Because Washington, DC participates in SAT School Day, students are encouraged to use the College Board fee waiver as well. The College Board distributes college application fee waivers to make the college application process more affordable for eligible students. If a student previously registered for and took the SAT or one of the SAT Subject Tests using a fee waiver, they are automatically eligible to receive **four** college application fee waivers.

Students will automatically receive their four fee waivers with their SAT test scores. Because fee waiver eligibility is verified by a school counselor before students take the SAT, a counselor will not need to sign off on a College Board college application fee waiver as well.

For a list of colleges that accept the College Board fee waiver, visit **www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers/participating-colleges**. Students eligible for fee waivers can also apply to any Common App college without a fee. For more information about this process and the College Board fee waiver process as a whole, visit **www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers.**

### Application Fees
Students not eligible for a fee waiver should conduct research to determine the amount of the required application fee for the college to which they plan to apply. They should also investigate payment methods accepted by the college (e.g., credit card, online check, mailed check, etc.).

For colleges that require payment information to be entered online in order to complete the application submission process, students should be made aware of the following options which may be available to them:
- Save the application and submit it at home later when they have access to a payment method.
- Purchase a prepaid credit card in the amount of the application fee so credit card information can be entered into the online application.
- Students should bring the appropriate payment information to the event.
- Students who are submitting a NACAC or College Board fee waiver will not be able to apply online. Those students should mail the fee waiver request along with the paper application.

### Fee Payment: Credit or Debit Card Required with Online Submission
Some colleges accept online applications only if accompanied by credit card payment for the application fee. If a student has a need-based fee waiver or needs to pay by check to these institutions, payment should accompany a paper copy of the application mailed to the admission office. Always check if the online application can be submitted online without the credit or debit card information. It may be possible to submit the online application and mail payment or a need-based fee waiver at a later date.

If students would like to apply to any of the schools requiring online payment during DC College Application and Exploration Month and do not have a credit card with them during the event, please inform them that some institutions allow you to save the application details they have filled in and complete the application from home.

### Fee Payment: Mailed with Hard Copy of Application Confirmation Page
Some colleges accept online applications with or without credit card payment. Students who do not pay at the time they submit the application online are requested to mail their payment via check or fee waiver with a hard copy of their application confirmation page. Instructions are given online at the time the student submits the application.

## Student FAQs on Applications

**Enrollment Information**

*What is my entering term and year?* Most students will select the fall semester following senior year; however, choose the summer option if you intend to attend summer school prior to Fall enrollment.

*What is my entrance status?* The following are definitions for each status:

> Freshman: This will be the first college in which you enroll after graduating high from school. Check this even if you have advanced placement (AP) credit, or dual enrollment, or have earned college credit in high school.
> Transfer: If you are graduating high school in the coming year and going directly to college, you are not a transfer student even if you have college credit.
> Non Degree: You want to take college course(s) but are not seeking a degree.

*What is my desired major?* Under First Choice, you can choose your first choice of majors. You may check "Undecided." Please note that you can change your major during your college program.

**Address**

*Can I list a Post Office Box?* You will need to also include a physical address even if you use a Post Office Box for your mailing address. Make sure this information is correct. The date the address became your permanent mailing address is the month and year you moved to this location which may even be your date of birth.

**College Information**

*What should I list for current college courses in progress or planned, including the term (to be) taken, course subject and number (example: BIO 1001), credit hours, and college/university?* You should list any courses for college credit completed, underway or planned before high school graduation. Please note that dual enrollment may be added here; however, do not list AP courses.

**Family Information**

*What family information am I required to submit?* You will need to answer the following required question: Are your father and/or mother living? Also, *Legal Guardian Information* is the same information requested for father and mother and Emergency Contact Information is required if it is other than parent or guardian.

**Campus Specific Information**

*What additional information will I need to include for each college application?* This information varies by educational institution. You can find more information by looking at the campus website.

**Miscellaneous Information**

*What types of questions will I be asked about my past criminal activity?* Virtually all campuses require students to answer questions about legal infractions. Answering "yes" to one or more of the questions will not necessarily preclude your being admitted.  However, your failure to provide complete, accurate, and truthful information can be grounds to deny or withdraw your admission, dismiss you, or subject you to disciplinary sanctions after enrollment. A campus may spot-check records and obtain official court and/or school documentation to ensure accuracy, and these campuses may share pertinent information as needed for the safety of others.   Some campuses have a process for conducting criminal background checks on applicants which may or may not happen with regard to your application. Complete honesty is expected.

## Submitting Applications

**Paying the Application Fee**

When a student submits an application online, they may be required to pay an application fee (unless it is a college/university that has a free application for admission). If a payment is required, they can pay their application fee the following ways:

1) Pay via credit or debit card online. Some colleges require a credit card to apply online. Help students do research prior to the event to see if the college they want to apply to requires one. If they chose this option, they will need the following information: Credit card type (Visa, MasterCard, etc.), credit card number, security code, name on credit card, date credit card was issued, and expiration date.
2) Submit the application online and pay via check in the mail (if the school allows this form of payment). They will need to include a copy of their confirmation page with your check.
3) Some students may qualify for an application fee waiver. Check with your school counselor or college adviser about this option. You will need to include a copy of your confirmation page with the fee waiver. If you are not a counselor, ask your local high school counselling office for more information.
4) Students may be able to save their application, print it, and mail it in with their payment (varies by institution).

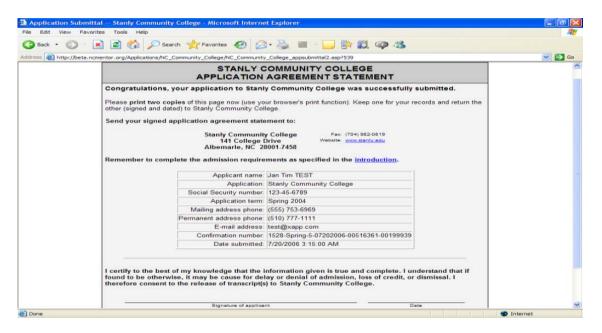**Follow Up with Transcripts, Test Scores, and Essays**

Many admission offices require students to submit additional information in order to complete the application process. It is important for students to find out what other information is required and send it to the campus as soon as possible. The quicker you submit all the necessary forms, the sooner you will receive a response from the admission office. Some additional requirements are the following:

- **Official transcripts (mandatory)**
  - Your transcripts will be sent through your high school counselor by your request.
- **SAT or ACT score (depends on the institution)**
- **Essays (depends on the institution)**
  - See the Student Resource Guide for additional essay resources.
- **Letters of recommendation (depends on the institution)**
  - These letters can be from a teacher, counselor, principal, coach, supervisor, pastor, employer, etc.

## Don't Forget Your Confirmation Page

Do not leave the computer lab without a hardcopy printout of your confirmation page. Also, some schools may require this page to be signed and mailed to the admission office to complete the application process. Whether the school requires this form or not, you still need a printed copy for your records. Either way, make sure you put this confirmation page in a safe place.

## Sample Confirmation Page



## Now that they applied to college, where can they learn more about paying for college?

➢ Remind students to visit FAFSA, DCTAG and Mayor's Scholars to research financial aid options.
➢ Remind students to speak with their family and college access counselor about their financial aid options.
➢ Students should complete their FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1. The sooner they submit the form, the better chances they have of getting an affordable financial aid package. Even if their tax information is not available, they can start the process by creating their Federal student aid (FSA) ID.
➢ Students should apply for DC TAG and if eligible, Mayor's Scholars as soon as possible after Feb. 1.
➢ Be sure to distribute copies of relevant financial aid hand-outs at your DC College Application and Exploration events.

## SECTION 6: DATA COLLECTION (for DC Public Charter Schools)

School-based site coordinators are expected to track and submit aggregate data (not student level) to OSSE. The data is used not only to celebrate our successes, but to track our efforts over time to ensure DC College Application and Exploration Month is fulfilling its intended purpose and goal: to encourage more low-income students, first generation college-going students and students who would have not otherwise considered college to complete a college application.

Although OSSE is requesting aggregate data, we encourage host sites to track and save the student-level data from year to year. Long term, you can use your data to evaluate if students from your school who participate in DC College Application and Exploration Month are more likely to enroll and complete a degree.

The following pages provide general instructions on how site coordinators should collect, track and submit data for DC College Application and Exploration Month.

*DCPS data collection will be managed by Central Office.*

### In this section:

## What Data is Collected?

For DC College Application and Exploration Month, we are asking you to provide the following data points to OSSE:
- Number of participating seniors
- Number of applications completed *during* DC College Application and Exploration Month from Nov. 1 – 30

**Additionally, if you are already tracking the data points listed below, you may also submit this information:**
- Number of applications completed *prior* to DC College Application Month (before Nov. 1)
- Breakdown of applications during DC College Application and Exploration Month from Nov. 1 – 30)
  - Number of four-year public applications
  - Number of two-year public applications
  - Number of four-year private applications
  - Number of "other" applications
- Number of first generation college-going students who completed an application
- Number of fee waivers used

## How to Submit the Data?

On Monday, Dec. 4, 2017, your District Coordinator will email a Site Coordinator Survey to all site coordinators. This survey is where you will submit your aggregate data. You do not need to email an excel spreadsheet or any other reports.  The **deadline** to complete the Site Coordinator Survey is **Friday, Dec. 15, 2017**.

## SECTION 7: Toolkit

These are individual documents that can be downloaded from the DC College Application and Exploration Month website, google drive or printed from this guide and used for programming at individual sites.

## In this section:

**Toolkit Items:**
    a.   Site Coordinator Planning Checklist (located in zip drive and website)
    b.   Ask Me About it! Poster
    c.   College Bingo
    d.   Online Scavenger Hunt

    e.   Volunteer or Donation Request Letter (Template)
    f.   Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members
    g.   Volunteer Reference Guide (Template)
    h.   Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

    i.   Press Release (Template)
    j.   Follow-Up Press Release (Template)
    k.   Student/Family Letter (Template)
    l.   DC College Application and Exploration Month Flyer

    m.   Student Sign-In Sheet (Template)

# Ask me about it!!
**____(TEACHER/STAFF MEMBER'S NAME)____**

# I graduated from...

## __ (COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY) __

**(Add mascot image or campus logo)**

# College BINGO Activity

Complete your BINGO card by locating teachers or other school staff members that experienced the following college scenarios or can answer "yes" to the following questions. Be sure to get the individual to sign in the space, and you can only use each person for one space!

| B | I | N | G | O |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attended a 4-Year College | Lived at Home While Attending College | Worked Full-Time While Attending College | Is Still Close Friends with His/Her College Roommate | Studied Abroad While in College |
| Attended a College in DC | Went to College on a Scholarship | Changed Majors 2 or More Times | Attended a 2-Year College | Majored in Math |
| Majored in Science | Attended an Out-of-State College | FREE SPACE | Worked for the School Newspaper, TV Station, or Radio Station in College | Met His/Her Partner in College |
| Lived on Campus | Is Currently Enrolled in a College Program or Course | Had a Mentor or Other Close Advisor in College | Was President or Leader of a School Club | Has Completed Graduate School |
| Attended 2 or More Colleges | Wishes They Were Still in College | Ate Ramen Noodles Several Times a Week While in College | Played Sports in College | Took Out Student Loans to Pay for College |

# Online Scavenger Hunt

1. Find and list the names of five colleges in DC:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Find the name of the college where students and alumni are referred to as "Chips."
   What is the name of the college? : _____
   Where is it located? : _____

3. What university is home to The Wharton School, the world's first collegiate business school?
   What is the name of the college? : _____
   Where is it located? : _____

4. What is the oldest Roman Catholic University in the United States? Where is it located?
   What is the name of the college? : _____
   Where is it located? : _____

5. Booker T. Washington was the first principal of what present-day University?
   What is the name of the college? : _____
   Where is it located? : _____

6. What is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States?

   _____

7. At what Washington, D.C. university have all the diplomas been signed by the current United States President at that time?

   _____

8. What was the first American Co-educational College?
   What is the name of the college? : _____
   Where is it located? : _____

9. Name 3 medical schools in Washington, DC:
   1: _____
   2: _____
   3: _____

10. What is a private college or university? Write the definition.

    _____
    _____

11. What is a public college or university? Write the definition.

    _____
    _____

12. What is the DC Tuition Assistance Grant? _____

_____

13. What is FASFA? _____

14. List the name of two colleges in DC that offer degrees in Engineering.
    First college: _____
    Second college: _____

15. Find a college in DC where you can train to be an electrician.
    What is the name of the college? : _____
    Where is it located? : _____

# Online Scavenger Hunt: Colleges in DC (answers)

1. Answers will vary
2. Central Michigan University. Main Campus, Mount Pleasant Michigan (the school also has a number of satellite campuses)
3. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
4. Georgetown University, Washington, DC
5. Tuskegee University, Tuskegee Alabama
6. Harvard University, Boston, MA
7. Gallaudet University
8. Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio
9. George Washington University, Georgetown University and Howard University
10. Possible Answers: The term "private" simply means that the university's funding comes from tuition, investments and private donor, not from taxpayers.
11. Possible Answer: The term "public" indicates that the university's funding comes partly from state taxpayers.
12. DCTAG is the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant. The program is administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. DCTAG pays the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition, **up to** $10,000 annually at 4 year public colleges and up to $2500 at private HBCUs and 2 year colleges.
13. The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Anyone who wants financial aid for college will need to fill out the FAFSA. The application is used to determine the dollar amount you or your family will be expected to contribute towards college.
14. Responses may vary
15. University of the District of Columbia Community College , Workforce Development

## Volunteer or Donation Letter (Template)

This letter should be distributed to any volunteer prospects and/or groups. Update the **blue/bold pieces** with your school's event information and feel free to add more event details to generate interest.

**School Logo and School Address**

**Date**

**Dear Name of Organization,**

**Name of Your High School or Organization** is pleased to announce its participation in the districtwide DC College Application and Exploration Month Initiative which will be held during the month of November. The goal of DC College Application and Exploration Month is to provide an opportunity for all District of Columbia Public School and public charter high school seniors to complete and file college applications, and to encourage younger students to start planning for life after high school. While the focus is on helping all students, special attention should be given to first-generation, low-income, and other students who might face barriers in applying to college.

Our school (or organization) will be hosting **activities on Date(s)** and would welcome **assistance, donations, etc.** With your help, students can connect to resources available outside of the classroom that will help them prepare for college and career. Our students would appreciate and benefit from your help and support as they plan for their future.

If you are able to assist us in making DC College Application and Exploration Month a success, please contact me by **date**. I will be in touch about how and when you can help at our school.

Thank you!

**Your Name**
**Your Title**
**Your Contact Information**

# DC College Application and Exploration Month November 2017

## A DC College Application and Exploration Month Overview for Principals, Teachers Staff, and Community Members

Our school or community-based organization is participating in the districtwide initiative, DC College Application and Exploration Month! DC College Application and Exploration Month will take place throughout the month of November. To ensure that our events are helpful to 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!

What is DC College Application and Exploration Month?
In 2012, as part of a national initiative through the American Council on Education, the District piloted its first College Application Week campaign. This initiative has grown and expanded to a month-long effort. It will provide a framework for high schools, community-based organizations, and postsecondary institutions to collaborate in a concentrated effort to engage and inform underrepresented students (first generation college students, and low-income students) about college and career exploration and the college application process.

What is the goal of DC College Application and Exploration Month?
Our goal is to provide every graduating high school senior with the opportunity to apply to college. While much of the focus of DC College Application and Exploration Month 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.

What happens during DC College Application and Exploration Month?
During the month of November, schools, colleges, and the community will work together to build excitement and awareness surrounding career/college exploration and the college application process. 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 all students. We want to emphasize that college awareness and exploration is an ongoing process – one that starts before November, and continues throughout the year.

How can I help?
You can help by assisting students in exploring their career or college options, lending one-on-one help with completing applications, contributing to the "spirit" of the week, or – perhaps most importantly – reaching out to students to encourage them to plan for life after high school. Seek out those students who might traditionally be overlooked when it comes to career or college planning, and talk to them about their options for the future. Also, check in with your school or community based organization's DC College Application and Exploration Month host site coordinator to learn about additional ways that you can support the event.

# Volunteer Reference Guide

## DC College Application and Exploration Month: General Information

Welcome to DC College Application and Exploration Month at [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL or ORGANIZATION]! 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 DC College Application and Exploration Month.

**DC College Application and Exploration Month is an event** supported by the Office of the State Superintendent and a districtwide steering committee and [NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL or ORGANIZATION]

The goal of DC College Application and Exploration Month is to provide an opportunity for all District of Columbia Public School and public charter high school seniors to complete and file college applications, and to encourage younger students to start planning for life after high school. While the focus is on helping all students, special attention should be given to first-generation, low-income, and other students who might face barriers in applying to college.

Students are encouraged to **research different college and universities** in order to find the best fit for them **prior to completing college Applications.**

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 DC do not have an application fee.

Some students may be **eligible for an application fee waiver** from their DCCAP Counselor based on their family income status. If students have questions about eligibility, please refer them to their school counselor.

For colleges that require an application fee, **students can use credit or debit cards online** 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. The FAFSA will be available this Oct. 1 for students who plan to attend college between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019.
 The earlier students and parents/guardians complete and submit this form, the better!

**DC TAG** provides up to $10,000 per year for college tuition for DC Residents. Funds are limited. Students must apply early beginning Feb. 1, 2018.

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.

## Steps for Volunteers

The following are potential steps a volunteer should take prior to DC College Application and Exploration Month and potential tasks a volunteer may be asked to complete during DC College Application and Exploration Month. Site Coordinators should share these recommended steps with their volunteers. Some volunteers may not think to confirm certain details like if the school has a volunteer/visitor policy. See page 7 for a more detailed listing of potential tasks that should be shared with all volunteers.

**Steps to Take Before DC College Application and Exploration Month Event**
- Visit www.osse.dc.gov/service/dc-college-application-and-exploration-month to learn more about DC College Application and Exploration Month

- Check in with Site Coordinator:
  - ✓ Confirm any volunteer/visitor policies (may require background checks).
  - ✓ Confirm day/time to arrive.
  - ✓ Receive anticipated volunteer assignment(s).

**Steps and Potential Tasks During DC College Application and Exploration Month (application drive event)**
- Guide students through the application process.
- Help students complete and submit college paper applications and fee waiver forms.
- Sign-in/Sign-out process: Ask where they intend to apply, applications completed, etc.
  - ✓ Track data
- Provide directions to the appropriate room.
- Pass out "Now What?" and/or financial aid information.
- Answer general questions about the application process.
- Monitor printers to ensure they remain in order and replenish as needed.
- Share personal experience.
- Congratulate students on applying.
- Share about your area of expertise (financial aid, college persistence, college preparation, essay writing, etc.)

## 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.

- o 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.

- o Greet students as they arrive. Make sure they use the sign-in sheet.

- o Help students log on to/access the 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.

- o Guide students through the college application process and help answer any questions students may have, regardless of where the student wishes to apply.

o Monitor printers to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed.

o Share personal college or career experiences with students.

o Give an "I Applied!" sticker and an *I Applied...Now What?* hand-out to each student after they complete an application.

o Share about your area of expertise (financial aid, college persistence, college preparation, essay writing, etc.)

o Remind students to use the sign-out sheet before leaving. Site coordinators need to track where students applied, fee waivers used, if it was their first application and if they will be a first-generation college student.

o 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.

o Remind students to share their experience with others and to remember to attend the Financial Aid Day events that will be held in your community. Hand-outs may be available regarding the upcoming Financial Aid events.

o Wear a college t-shirt or sweatshirt.

g. Volunteer Reference Guide (template)
Download: *http://bit.ly/2bLZ9xd*

## Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS

DATE

Dear [VOLUNTEER'S NAME],

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

During DC College Application and Exploration Month, [NUMBER OF SENIORS SUBMITTING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS] of our seniors submitted over [NUMBER OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED] college applications to colleges and universities across DC and the country. 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 OR ORGANIZATION] thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time during DC College Application and Exploration Month! We look forward to seeing you throughout the school year and especially at our event next year.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[{YOUR TITLE]

## Press Release (Template)

Include information specific to your event and send to local media outlets (newspapers, TV stations, community newsletters, etc.). Also, disseminate via your school or organization's website. Update the **highlighted pieces** with your school or community based organization's event information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE**

For more information, please contact:
**Name, Title**
**School**
**Phone**
**Email Address**

**SCHOOL or ORGANIZATION NAME** WILL PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE MONTH

WASHINGTON, DC – To assist students in preparing and applying to college, **Name of Your High School or ORGANIZATION** will participate in DC College Application and Exploration Month held during November.

As part of this initiative, **Name of Your High School or Organization** will work with its students on **Your School or Organization's Event Date(s)** to explore career and college options, plan their future goals, and apply to college.

The goal of the program is to get more students applying to college in their senior year. During this event, students may apply to any two-year or four-year college/university or training program in which they are interested.

**Name of Site Coordinator or School Principal,** DC College Application and Exploration Month event Site Coordinator for **Name of Your High School or Organization**, expects more than **Number** seniors to participate with the help of **Number** of volunteers from **School Faculty, Staff, Administration, College, Community Resources**.

For more information about **Name of Your High School or Organization**, please contact **Name of Site Coordinator and Contact Information**.

- END -

## Follow-up Press Release (Template)

Update the **highlighted pieces** with your school or organization's event information. If you have pictures from your school's event(s), it is a good idea to provide them to the newspaper along with the release. Just be sure you have school media releases on file for students who are pictured.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE**

For more information, please contact:
**Name, Title**
**School**
**Phone**
**Email Address**

**SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION NAME** PARTICIPATES IN DC COLLEGE APPLICATION AND EXPLORATION MONTH

**WASHINGTON, DC**– To assist students in preparing and applying to college, **Name of Your High School** or **Organization** participated in DC College Application and Exploration Month held during November. The goal of the week was to help all seniors apply to some type of post high school program, including certificate programs, two-year degree programs, and four-year degree programs.

During DC College Application and Exploration Month, students at **Name of Your High School or Organization** participated in a variety of college awareness activities, including **list specific activities**. To date, **##percent** of **Name of Your High School or organization's** senior class has applied to college. In addition, **number** of volunteers from **School Faculty, Administration, College, and Community Resources** assisted with this event.

This month provided an opportunity for high schools and postsecondary institutions to collaborate in a concentrated effort to engage and inform underrepresented students (first-generation college students and low-income students) about the college application process. DC College Application and Exploration Month was coordinated by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the DC College Application and Exploration Month steering committee including members from professional organizations and agencies that serve a variety of stakeholders from both the K-12 community, community based organizations, and higher education in the District of Columbia.

- END -

# Student/Family Letter (Template)

Update the **highlighted pieces** with your school or organization's event information and feel free to add more details.

**School Logo and School Address**

**Date**

Dear Students and Families,

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), in collaboration with the American College Application Campaign, is pleased to announce November as DC College Application and Exploration Month. Throughout the month, high schools and community-based organizations across the District will host events to assist students with the college application process. Our school or organization will participate in the DC College Application and Exploration Month effort, with the goal of ensuring that all members of our senior class apply to at least one postsecondary program.

The goal of DC College Application and Exploration Month is to provide an opportunity for all District of Columbia public school and public charter school seniors to complete and file college applications. To us, "college" or "postsecondary" means any education program beyond high school including certificate program, two-year degree programs and four-year degree programs. This initiative is so important because research shows that most new jobs will require some form of education and training beyond high school.

In order to apply to college during DC College Application and Exploration Month, students will need to complete the College Application Worksheet we have attached to this letter. We are encouraging all students who have not yet applied to college to complete the worksheet prior to completing an application, as it has all the information students will need to complete an online application. We expect that students and their families will need to work together in gathering the information listed.

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 contact **Name, Title at (000) 000-0000**. Volunteers can greet and sign in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about college or scholarship opportunities.

If you are new to the college application process and are looking for more information, visit this website for a list of great resources for parents: www.osse.dc.gov/service/dc-college-application-and-exploration-month.

Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative to encourage DC public and public charter school students to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,

**School Counselor/Principal/Site Coordinator**

k. Student/Family Letter
Download: *http://bit.ly/2bLZ9xd*

## Student Sign-In Sheet

Please include your name and school(s) to which you intend to apply.

| FULL NAME | APPLICATION SCHOOL(S) |
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# Thank you for hosting
# DC College Application and Exploration Month

**College is *postsecondary education*:**
OSSE uses the term "college" to refer to the attainment of
valuable postsecondary credentials beyond high school,
including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees.

**College is *a necessity*:**
Postsecondary education is a prerequisite to success in a knowledge-based economy.
Everyone should pursue and complete a postsecondary credential or degree beyond high school.

**College is *for everyone*:**
The postsecondary education attainment rates among low-income students and students of color are
significantly lower than those of other students.
OSSE and the DC College Application and Exploration Month Steering Committee are committed to
closing these gaps.

**College is *a public good*:**
Postsecondary educational opportunity and attainment are critical to a
just and equitable society, strong economy, and healthy communities.

**www.osse.dc.gov/service/dc-college-application-and-exploration-month**

**A special thanks to the**

**2017 DC College Application and Exploration Month Steering Committee**

Ajamu Clark, DC College Access Program

Olutosin Akinyode, DCPS

Apri Gassaway, Raise DC

Timothy Payne, For the Love of Children

Mary Williams, United Negro College Fund

Dominique Footes, University of the District of Columbia Community College

Nicole Newman, Public Charter School Board

Jennifer Uwanaka, George Washington University Office of Admissions

Claire Bucknor, Federal Student Aid

Maisha Challenger, Federal Student Aid

Sekenia Welch, National Collegiate Prep

Angela Bugayong, College Success Foundation

Kevin Mungin, College Success Foundation