Coordinator Toolkit

Your guide to planning, promoting, and hosting a successful college application day event AND promoting College Goal SC

Step **1** Apply to College

COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH

Step **2** Apply for Financial Aid

COLLEGE GOAL
SOUTH CAROLINA

Filling out the free FAFSA...
we're making it EASY!

S C
C A N

SOUTH CAROLINA
can go to college

@ sccango   SC CAN GO

Dear College Application Month Site Coordinators:

On behalf of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, thank you for hosting College Application Day at your high school. Your involvement will ensure the success of the College Application Month initiative. The goal of this program is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications.

While the focus is to help all students, special attention should be given to first-generation, minority, and students who might not otherwise apply to college.

To ensure the success of your College Application Day event, please be sure that you first complete these important tasks:

1. Identify a site coordinator (if not yourself) who will be responsible for planning and implementing the event at your school.
2. Invite all seniors at your school to participate and make efforts to ensure that each student completes at least one college admission application.
3. Schedule the event during normal school hours.
4. Recruit volunteers to support the site coordinator and assist students during the event.

This Site Coordinator Toolkit is intended to be a useful guide to help you plan and implement a successful College Application Day event at your school. Most sections will be available online for you to download and print. Go to ***www.che.sc.gov/sccango*** for more information. Please take the time before you start the coordination of the event to read through this handbook completely and identify those tools that will be most helpful to you and your volunteers.

We sincerely appreciate all of the effort and time that you have committed to make this event a success. Your involvement will help educate South Carolina students and their families about the myriad postsecondary opportunities available to them.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding planning and implementing the College Application Day event at your school. We will keep you informed should there be any updates, changes, or additions that you might find beneficial.

Sincerely,

The College Application Month Team

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education, has named October as South Carolina College Application Month. Throughout the months of September, October and November, high schools across the state will host College Application Day events to assist students with the college application process. The goal of College Application Day is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications. While the events are geared toward first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, we encourage participating high schools to include activities for all students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have already applied to college.

The College Application Month initiative comes at a critical time in our state's history. Overwhelming evidence reveals that higher levels of education lead to greater prosperity and competitiveness in the knowledge economy. However, South Carolina is well short of the national average and behind the national leaders in the proportion of adults who hold graduate/professional and baccalaureate degrees. At the associate degree level, South Carolina exceeds the national average but is well behind the leading states. College Application Month is designed to expand statewide college access and awareness.

COORDINATOR TOOLKIT CONTENTS

SECTION 1:
PLANNING YOUR
COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY

Your College Application Day event can be as big as your imagination will allow. With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your College Application Day will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school. It's time to get the whole school involved and pull out all the stops.

In the following pages, you will find a timeline/checklist that can be tailored to your specific event, a page of helpful reminders for the day of the event, and tools to use on event day.

INSIDE THIS SECTION:

Site Coordinator Checklist
Event Day Reminders
Resources
    Student Sign-in Sheet
    Sample Event Schedules

SITE COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

Write in your own due dates and use the blank spaces for additional tasks necessary for planning your event. Remember, the earlier you are able to complete these tasks the better!

	AUGUST	
✓	*Due Date*	*Task*
		Review Site Coordinator training materials and contact SC CHE if you have questions.
		Visit www.sccango.org for program updates and downloadable resources. Click EVENTS in the main menu and find College Application Month. The materials there will help you plan your event for years to come.
		Confirm computers and printers are reserved for your College Application Day event. Please make sure that your team meets with IT to ensure that students can access their personal email accounts, www.sccango.org and college websites.
		Establish a school team to advise and assist in College Application Day preparation. Discuss the timeline of events and scheduled activities.
		Recruit volunteers to assist during College Application Day. It is recommended to have 1 volunteer to every 4-5 computers or 4-5 volunteers for every 25 students. Reach out to the school staff and teachers to volunteer. Contact local colleges to invite admissions staff and faculty to volunteer during your College Application Day event. Also, reach out to local community organizations and parents as a source of volunteers. The success of your program is directly tied to the strength of your volunteer workforce.
		Make sure your College Application Month team checks all school guest rules and regulations before volunteers attend your event. This includes any background checks needed to enter the school on your College Application Day.
		Develop a schedule for your event. ***(See sample schedule)*** Think about the following: • Which students and classes will be in the lab at what times? • What other college awareness activities will be available to students? • Will you plan activities for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have already completed college applications? Notify teachers of your plans.
		Ensure that teachers will have activities that surround the student booklet.
		Remind students to take SAT/ACT if interested in applying to four-year institutions.

SEPTEMBER		
✓	*Due Date*	*Task*
		Encourage all teachers to plan College Application Month related activities, including extra credit for students who complete the STUDENT SURVEY.
		Review online Site Coordinator materials. Contact the College Application Team for more information.
		Distribute Student Resource Guides, folders and any other material you received in your College Application Month box of materials. (***Note: Your school should have received these items by the beginning of the school year.)***
		Encourage all seniors to get familiar with the SCHOLAR Web page at www.che.sc.gov/sccango.
		Determine which seniors have not applied to a college/university and encourage them to attend College Application Day at your school.
		Send press release(s) to local newspapers, TV stations and social media announcing the event. This is a good way to ensure volunteer and community support.
		Solicit door prizes.
		Finalize volunteer list. Confirm the time and place for all volunteers. Please direct volunteers to the online materials on www.sccango.org for more information if needed.
		Send student and parent letters notifying them of your College Application Day event.
		Encourage students to meet with counselors to discuss fee waivers, if applicable. Fee Waiver lists will be available no later than September.
OCTOBER		
		Please be sure to check again with your school and/or district to ensure that the SCHOLAR Web page at www.sccango.org is accessible to your students. This will be the "homepage" of your College Application Day; therefore, it is very important that students have access to this Web page.
		Host student/parent/guardian event(s)—day and/or night—to assist students and parents/guardians who have questions or need help with the ***College Application Worksheets***. *(Note: The worksheets can be found in the student's resource guide.)*
		Confirm attendance of all volunteers. Remind them of the time and place of your event and any other pertinent information.
		Confirm publicity and door prizes.
		Confirm all seniors have completed their ***College Application Worksheet pages*** (Student Resource Guide).
		Remind teachers, counselors, and administrators of the day's schedule and planned activities. Ask them to wear college clothing on event day and decorate their classrooms with "college-going culture" materials.
		COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH! HAVE FUN AT YOUR EVENT!
		Financial Aid Follow-up. Encourage students to sign up for College Goal SC for FAFSA completion assistance. Registration is available at www.collegegoalsc.org. College Goal SC cards were shipped in your packet and should be given to the students as they leave the College Application event.

EVENT DAY REMINDERS

- Check all computers and make sure that no pertinent Web sites are blocked by your school or your district.

- If possible, set computer homepages to www.sccang.org SCHOLAR page.

- 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.
    - High school name
    - School mailing address
    - Phone number
    - Fax number
    - School code
    - Each counselor's contact information, including e-mail address
    - SAT and ACT dates
        > *Most colleges ask students to list the dates on which they took the test or when they plan to take it. A quick reference will make a big difference.*
    - Application Web site: www.sccango.org (SCHOLAR)

- Have seniors sign in as they arrive. Refer to the sample sign-in sheet that is included in this toolkit. The sheet is also available for download at www.sccango.org.

- Check to be sure they have brought with them their completed **College Application Worksheets**.

- Have students begin the application process at www.sccango.org.

- Be sure that students complete and submit application(s), print confirmation page(s) or save application(s) for final work in the next day or two.

- After your students have completed the desired amount of college applications:
    - Remind each of them to review the Step 1 and Step 2 program cards that provide information on STEP 2: Financial AID and the FAFSA form - College Goal SC
    - Distribute the "I Applied" stickers. Student must complete the STUDENT SURVEY upon completion of the program and before they can receive the I APPLIED STICKER.
        > *Make sure students are signing out before they leave their College Application Day event. The Commission on Higher Education will request this information to be entered through www.sccango.org under END OF EVENT REPORTS.*

- Encourage students to attend College Goal SC.
        > *College Goal SC will assist students and their families in completing and filing the FAFSA. College Goal SC takes place during the month of February of each year.*

STUDENT SIGN-IN SHEET

Sign in with your name and school(s) to which you intend to apply.

STUDENT NAME	COLLEGE(S) APPLYING TO

This document can be found online under the College Application Month section on www.sccango.org.

SAMPLE EVENT SCHEDULES

It is important to keep school staff informed of the event schedule during the planning and implementation stages of your College Application Day event. Communicate with staff members to identify the most effective schedule possible specific to your school's needs. Use the following samples as a guide and make adjustments for your specific event.

SAMPLE HALF-BLOCK SCHEDULE – 2 COMPUTER LABS
(By block teacher's name)

	Computer Lab A	Computer Lab B
8:05-8:45 a.m.	Block 1 Jones	Block 1 Davis
8:50-9:30 a.m.	Block 1 Anderson	Block 1 Parker
9:40-10:20 a.m.	Block 2 Pressley	Block 2 Hardin
10:25-11:10 a.m.	Block 2 Williams	Block 2 Johnson
Lunch Break		
12:05-12:50 p.m.	Block 3 Woods	Block 3 Martin
12:55-1:35 p.m.	Block 3 Greene	Block 3 Thompson
1:40-2:20 p.m.	Block 4 Brown	Block 4 Miller

SAMPLE OPEN SCHEDULE – 1 COMPUTER LAB
(By senior's last name)

	Computer Lab A
8:05-8:45 a.m.	A – Co
8:50-9:30 a.m.	Cr – Fi
9:40-10:20 a.m.	Fl – K
10:25-11:10 a.m.	Ke – O
Lunch Break	
12:05-12:50 p.m.	Or – Ru
12:55-1:35 p.m.	S – Z
1:40-2:20 p.m.	Make-up

SAMPLE HOMEROOM SCHEDULE – 2 COMPUTER LABS
(By homeroom teacher's name; students leave during other periods)

	Computer Lab A	Computer Lab B
8:05-8:45 a.m.	Jones	Davis
8:50-9:30 a.m.	Anderson	Parker
9:40-10:20 a.m.	Pressley	Hardin
10:25-11:10 a.m.	Williams	Johnson
Lunch Break		
12:05-12:50 p.m.	Woods	Martin
12:55-1:35 p.m.	Greene	Thompson
1:40-2:20 p.m.	Brown	Miller

SECTION 2:
GETTING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED

The success of your College Application Day relies not just on you, but on your school and your community.

Engaging the school community in the planning and implementation process will create excitement about the event. And the more support you have, the more success you will see. Additionally, the community plays an important role in creating and sustaining a college-going culture.

In the following pages, you will find ideas for engaging students, school faculty, and members of the community, including a volunteer resource guide that will help you to prepare your volunteers for event day.

INSIDE THIS SECTION:

Who to Involve
Volunteer Resource Guide
Resources
    Volunteer Quick Guide to College Application Day
    Sample Volunteer Recruitment Letter
    Volunteer Roster
    Volunteer Information Form

WHO TO INVOLVE

STUDENTS

Recruit students to help implement College Application Day. Identify student leaders from each grade who would love to bring their own ideas to the table.

- Select "student ambassadors" from each grade and educate them on the purpose of College Application Day. Ask them to share implementation ideas and post and distribute materials.
- Allow student ambassadors to apply their College Application Day event experience as community service hours.
- 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 College Application Day or recruit them for the program.
- Ask students to promote College Application Day through their Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts. Suggest creating an "Event" and inviting their peers to attend.

TEACHERS

Teachers are your greatest allies in motivating students to pursue higher education. It's not only their job; it's their passion. We recommend enlisting their help to make your school's College Application Day a huge success. Share the planning calendar with them and ask for their help in brainstorming ways to make this event something the whole school embraces.

- Suggest that teachers use the weeks before the event to encourage their students to come up with ideas on how to get the word out to all their friends.
- Have teachers recruit "student ambassadors" to help decorate the school, distribute College Application Day materials, and encourage their friends to take the appropriate action steps for their grade.
- Ask them to dedicate at least one class before the event to plan college application-related activities such as essay writing and completing the ***College Application Worksheets***.
- Encourage them to use the student activities available in this toolkit and the "Student Activities" section under College Application Month on www.sccango.org. They can even come up with their own ideas.

VOLUNTEERS/COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Volunteer/Community involvement is crucial to the success of your event. Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your College Application Day a success by either donating time and/or resources. Some examples may include:

- School Alumni
- Students' families, PTA, School Improvement Council
- Retired educators
- Volunteer, senior, or church groups
- Community College and University representatives and faculty
- Business, community, and political leaders
- Youth programs (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, 4H, Girl and Boy Scouts of America)

Send all potential volunteers and/or groups a College Application Day recruitment letter with an event explanation and details.

Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Depending on your school district's policy, you may need to conduct a background check.

VOLUNTEER RESOURCE GUIDE

The success of your College Application Day is dependent upon the strength of your volunteer workforce. Therefore, it is essential to recruit and train enough volunteers to ensure the success of your program. Below is a guide you can follow to ensure you have a well-informed and efficient volunteer force.

NOTIFY THEM

Once you have recruited and finalized your volunteer roster for College Application Day, you will need to notify them of the event details. You can use the template on the next page as a guide.

GIVE THEM OPTIONS

Volunteer opportunities can range from greeting students to helping them fill out the applications. Below is a list of possible opportunities. Add in your event-specific needs and use this as a tool to help volunteers choose a task.

- Greet students
- Sign in students
- Computer lab monitor
- Assist students with the completion of online college applications
- Distribute information about financial aid opportunities
- Distribute important instruction sheets

*Create a short explanation of each responsibility for volunteers to follow throughout the day.

IDENTIFY THEM

Providing name badges for volunteers on the day of the event will be helpful for students in asking for assistance.

TRAIN THEM

On the morning of the event, conduct a quick orientation to familiarize volunteers with event details. Provide volunteers with the job description handout if they did not bring this with them to College Application Day.

THANK THEM

Send a thank-you letter to all volunteers for their dedication to College Application Day. Handwrite a note to each volunteer. You may also want to give students the opportunity to thank the volunteers as well.

VOLUNTEER QUICK GUIDE TO COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY

Welcome to College Application Day! We appreciate your hard work and dedication to making college a reality for our students. Use this reference guide to familiarize yourself with the details of our College Application Day program.

What is College Application Day?

College Application Day is a statewide event sponsored by the SC Commission on Higher Education and the SC Department of Education. Over 150 high schools across South Carolina will conduct College Application Day events during the month of October.

What is the goal of College Application Day?

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 Day is geared toward first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, we have encouraged all students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have already applied to college, to participate in the events leading up to College Application Day.

How have the students prepared?

In preparation for College Application Day, students have been encouraged to research different colleges and universities to find the best fit for their academic ambitions.

They have also been given a Student Resource Guide and should have completed the **College Application Worksheets** to make for easy entry of information as they complete online applications. All of this information has also been made available to them at www.sccango.org.

How do I address questions about application fees and fee waivers?

Students that are eligible for an application fee waiver from the College Board based on their family income status have been notified by their school counselor. Should students have questions about eligibility, please refer them to their school counselor.

For colleges that require an application fee, students can use credit/debit cards online or print their online application(s) and mail with a check to the college(s).

What are their next steps?

In order to be eligible for financial aid, college applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1 of their senior year. The earlier students complete and submit this form, the better!

Seniors can receive free help completing and submitting their FAFSA form at their school's College Goal South Carolina event. The event is hosted each year by the SC Commission on Higher Education and the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT LETTER

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

School Logo
School Address

August _____, _____

Dear **Name of Organization**,

Name of Your High School is pleased to announce its participation in the statewide College Application Month event, sponsored by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education. The goal of College Application Month is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications. While the focus is helping all students, special attention should be given to first-generation, minority, and students who might not otherwise apply to college.

We will be hosting our College Application Month event on **Date(s)** and would welcome representatives from **Name of Organization** to visit our school during this exciting and important time. With your help, students can connect to resources available outside of the classroom that will help them prepare for college. 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 look to your help and support as they take a big step in the direction of going to college.

If you or any of your colleagues at **Name of Organization** are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact **Name, Contact Info** at **Name of Your High School**.

Thank you!

Your Name
Your Title

This document can be found online under the College Application Month section on www.sccango.org.

VOLUNTEER ROSTER

VOLUNTEER NAME	ORGANIZATION	E-MAIL	PHONE	TIME AVAILABLE	NOTES

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY: EVENT DETAILS
Thank you for your time and dedication to college access at our school!

EVENT DATE	
EVENT TIME	
LOCATION	
SITE COORDINATOR NAME/CONTACT INFO	
PRINCIPAL NAME	
EVENT SCHEDULE	
VOLUNTEER DUTIES	

Please meet at the school by X:XX a.m. on the day of the event for a brief orientation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Name, Title
School Name
Phone
E-mail

This document can be found online under the College Application Month section on www.sccango.org.

SECTION 3:
PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

Promoting your school's College Application Day is crucial. While much of the focus for College Application Month is geared toward seniors, a truly successful event has the entire school community actively engaged. In the following pages, you'll find ideas and sample activities you can use to promote the event to all those involved—both within your school community and outside the walls of your school.

INSIDE THIS SECTION:

IN-SCHOOL PROMOTION IDEAS

GET THE WORD OUT

Use daily PA announcements to generate awareness of College Application Month activities at your school. Begin these announcements in the weeks leading up to your event and continue through to the event day. If your school has a morning news program, coordinate with 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. Student newspapers are also a great place to highlight the event. Encourage student writers to feature stories. You may even wish to place an ad in the paper.

Example PA Announcement:
Seniors, it is not too late. Freshmen, it is not too early. Everyone, now's the time to plan for the perfect career and the education you'll need to get it. Next week (YOUR SCHOOL NAME) is hosting College Application Day, so help is on the way. Talk to your counselor or go to www.sccango.org for more information on planning for college.

HOST A PEP RALLY

Talk with your school administrators about holding a kick-off pep 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 apprenticeship program and have them tell the student body the one thing they are most looking forward to in college or trade school, why they selected the school or program they did, or any first-hand account of actions already taken.

FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Sponsor a class contest between the different grades to inspire all students to take the college preparation process seriously during College Application Month. Classes compete against each other to have the most students taking action. Keep a record on your school web site or Facebook page.

HOST HOMEROOM WORKSHOPS

Conduct workshops during homeroom with students throughout College Application Month. Some examples may include the following:

- 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 (accessible on www.sccango.org), PSAT, etc.
- Juniors: Money management, finding scholarships, admission process, college entrance exams, preparing to apply, writing personal statements and essays, etc.
- Seniors who have already applied to college: what to expect in college, resume writing, FAFSA, searching for scholarships, finding the right college for you, etc.

HOST A PARENT NIGHT

Sponsor a parent night and have parents 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 to come with questions or discussion ideas.

DRESS THE PART

During College Application 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.

DRESS THE SCHOOL

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 to create a "college-going culture" on the walls of your school. In your Coordinator Packet, you'll find a supply of event posters. Fill in the appropriate date, time, location, and contact info and post these in classrooms and common areas around the school.

INVITE GUEST SPEAKERS

Invite admissions staff from local colleges/universities to provide general information related to their campus, including the majors offered, admission requirements, application process, and cost of attendance.

HAVE A TRIAL RUN

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.

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 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 essays into their class curriculum to encourage students to begin working on their college essays.

GIVE AWAY COLLEGE "STUFF"

Hold drawings during College Application Month. Ask colleges and universities to donate promotional items (banners, hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) to use as giveaways during your event. Also, ask local businesses for items for your drawing.

COMMUNICATE

Send letters or e-mail reminders to all parents, students, and school staff. Also, include information in the school newsletter and post fliers around the school and community about your College Application Day event. You can use the *Sample Student/Family Letter* at the end of this section as a guide.

You can find additional activities to promote college awareness and access in the following pages and under the "Student Activities" section for College Application Month at www.sccango.org.

COLLEGE BINGO: ACTIVITY

Complete by locating teachers that can answer 'yes'
to questions related to their college experience.

Lived at home while attending college	Attended a 2-year college before transferring to a 4-year college	Worked full-time while attending college	Graduated with a 3.5 GPA	Majored in History
Changed majors 3 times while in college	Was on the college baseball team	Attended the same college as his/her parents	Worked in the college admissions office or served as a tour guide	Participated in Study Abroad while in college
Was elected homecoming king/ queen	Served as the school mascot during a college sports event	Is still best friends with his/her college roommate	Had a double major while in college	Graduated from college with a bachelors in 5 years
Ate Ramen Noodles several times a week while in college	Attended college in South Carolina	Wrote for his/her school newspaper	Was in a sorority or fraternity	Graduated summa cum laude from college
Completed bachelors AND masters degree in 5 years	Was elected student government president	Attended college while still enrolled in high school	Met wife/husband while enrolled in college	Served as a Resident Advisor (RA) while living on campus

ASK ME ABOUT IT: ACTIVITY

The purpose of this activity is to identify staff members by their institutions of higher education and engage students in dialogue with faculty and staff members regarding college access and college applications.

INSTRUCTIONS

E-mail a sample sign like the one included on the next page to all faculty and staff and ask them to complete and post it by the designated posting date.

Allow students to scavenger hunt for as many different schools as they can find. Some ideas include:

- The school with the most alums
- The school that is the furthest away
- The school with the most football national championship titles

Award small prizes or announce the winners via PA announcements or on the morning news program.

ATTENTION: SENIORS

College Application Day Is

DATE

I attended

NAME OF COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

Ask Me About It!

YOUR NAME

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE
(Bold, underlined content to be inserted based on school and event details.)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, please contact:
Name, Phone, E-mail Address

SCHOOL NAME HOSTS COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH

CITY, SC (DATE) - In an effort to promote college awareness and access, **Name of Your High School** will participate in College Application Month, a statewide initiative sponsored by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the South Carolina Department of Education during the month of October.

Name of Your High School will host an event, College Application Day, to work with their senior class on **Your School's Event Date** to complete and submit online at least one college application as a part of this college access initiative.

The goal of College Application Month is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications. While much of the focus of College Application Month is geared toward first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, we encourage participating high schools to include activities for all students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have already applied to college.

Name of Site Coordinator, College Application Day event Site Coordinator for **Name of Your High School**, is expecting 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 about **Name of Your High School** College Application Day event, please contact **Name of Site Coordinator and contact information**.

This document can be found online under the College Application Month section on www.sccango.org.

SAMPLE STUDENT/FAMILY LETTER
(Bold, underlined content to be inserted based on event details.)

School Logo
School Address

September _____, _____

Dear Students and Families,

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education is pleased to announce October as **College Application Month**. High schools across the state will host College Application Day events to assist students with the college application process throughout the months of September through November. On **Date(s) of Event**, all seniors expected to graduate in June will be encouraged to complete at least one online application to apply for admission to a South Carolina college or university, if they have not already done so. This event is possible due to the collaborative efforts of the administration, faculty, and staff at **Name of Your High School**, as well as students, their families, and volunteers across the community.

The goal of College Application Month is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications. In order to participate fully, prior to each event, students will need to complete the ***College Application Worksheets*** located in the Student Resource Guide distributed by the school. We are encouraging all to complete the ***College Application Worksheets*** prior to the event, as it has all the information students will need to complete an online application. We anticipate that students and their families will need to work together in gathering the information needed to complete the worksheets.

Families are welcome to visit **Name of Your High School on Date(s) of Event** to assist their student during the application process. In addition, if family members 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**. Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative to encourage South Carolina's students to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,

School Counselor/Principal/Site Coordinator

This document can be found online under the College Application Month section on www.sccango.org.

SECTION 4:
STUDENT RESOURCES

The Student Resources section includes technical guidance on how to access college and university applications from the SCHOLAR page on www.sccango.org during College Application Day. Key information in this section also includes a guide to accessing online applications, a copy of a sample college application, and a helpful student handout detailing next steps once a student has successfully completed and submitted his/her college application(s).

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Answers to Student FAQs
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    Student Handout: Parts of a College Application
    Student Handout: Preparing for College Application Day
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IMPORTANT STUDENT REMINDERS

Before your event, you will need to prepare students as much as possible. To ensure that you have it all covered, here is a list of helpful student reminders.

- Direct seniors to the **College Application Worksheets** in the Student Resource Guide to fill out any additional information. A copy can be found at the end of this section, along with **Parts of a College Application and Preparing for College Application Day: Instruction Sheet.**

- Contact students who may be eligible for a fee waiver. Usually those students who are eligible for fee waivers on college entrance exams are also eligible for college application fee waivers.

- Remind first-generation, minority, and students who might not otherwise apply to college to prepare early for their admission essay(s) and encourage teachers to include activities in the classroom geared toward writing essays.

- Familiarize yourself and event volunteers with the SCHOLAR page on www.sccango.org.

- Remind students that information about their addresses and parents will be used to determine tuition and residency. Students may question information they are asked to supply about their addresses and parents' residency (e.g., in-state or out-of-state).

- Remind students to bring, or have committed to memory, their social security number, as this is required for submitting most college applications. (You may want to have a secure list of social security numbers just in case students do not have this information.)

ANSWERS TO STUDENT FAQs

Students will have a lot of questions about the college application process, especially if they are a first-generation college student. Listed here are the answers to some common questions about online applications.

Do I need to create a new college application account?

For students who have already created college application accounts or completed college applications, please remind them to bring their account information with them. They will not need to create new accounts.

*You may want to ask your district to unblock Yahoo, Google (Gmail), Hotmail, and any other popular e-mail service providers. It may be necessary for the students to check their e-mail accounts to access their application account information.

How do I submit my essay?

Please note some applications will require an admission essay or a personal statement. Remind students to bring their essay(s) with them. Some applications will allow the file to be uploaded. Others may require them to copy and paste from an existing document (which they may have stored on an external device such as a flash drive).

Most essay questions are open-ended, but some may have word minimum and/or maximum limits. If there is a word limit, it will be specified within the essay question. If a student submits an essay that is too short or long, an error will be issued, and the student will need to revise his/her essay.

How do I submit official transcripts?

Most colleges and universities require applicants to submit a transcript, including their senior year schedule. Please develop a process that will allow your students to notify you of the colleges to which they wish you to send their official transcripts.

Is my information confidential?

Assure parents and students that all information submitted for online applications is secure and confidential.

APPLICATION FEES AND FEE WAIVER INFORMATION

Familiarize yourself with the college application fee and waiver process and share this information with your students. Many colleges require a processing fee before accepting admission applications. It is important that your students know the application fee requirements for the colleges to which they wish to apply. Please note that many colleges and universities accept fee waivers for the SAT and ACT. The following information was taken from The College Board's Web site and will provide valuable guidance regarding the waiver process.

WHICH STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE AND HOW THEY CAN APPLY?

With the average college application fee now ranging between $40 - $70, applying to several colleges can be expensive for any student—and prohibitive for families on the lower end of the economic scale. Let your students and their parents know that they may be eligible for waivers of these fees.

The fee waiver request forms described below should be given out on the basis of family financial hardship. After your student completes his/her waiver, you may be asked to detail the student's financial hardship in writing.

COLLEGE BOARD FEE WAIVER FORM

Students who have taken advantage of the College Board's SAT® Program fee waiver service—which covers the basic test fees for the SAT® and SAT Subject Tests™—may also be eligible for up to four application fee waivers for colleges.

You should have received these **Request for Waiver of College Application Fee** forms as part of the SAT Program fee waiver materials shipped to you in the summer, and you can distribute these to your students as necessary. If you need additional forms, call the Counselor Helpline at (888) SAT-HELP (888-728-4357). For more information, **see the Counselor's Guide to SAT® Program Fee Waivers (.pdf/728K)**.

*Note that your student may have to include a copy of his/her SAT or ACT fee waiver form with his/her application fee waiver request form.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for SAT Program fee waivers (and thus for up to four college application fee waivers), a student must be either an American citizen or a foreign national who is testing in the United States, Puerto Rico, or U.S. territories. Eligibility is determined by family income or by participation in a public assistance program or other program for economically disadvantaged families. The income guidelines are based on those of the federal free and reduced-price lunch program.

MAXIMUM OF FOUR

Make sure your students understand that each student can receive and use up to four Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms. Tell them, too, that they should only send the forms with their applications to institutions that are listed in the Directory of Colleges Cooperating with the SAT Program Fee Waiver Service.

INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES' POLICIES

Although most colleges and universities follow the general guidelines of the NACAC and College Board for determining fee waiver recipients, individual institutions' policies vary. Research the policies of the schools your students are applying to, especially state institutions or systems—they may have their own forms and income guidelines. If students meet the basic criteria of each institution, it is almost certain they'll be granted the waiver.

DETERMINING WHO MIGHT QUALIFY FOR A WAIVER

How do you determine which students may qualify for a fee waiver? If you have access to the list of students in the free or reduced-price lunch program, you will have an indication of who might qualify. However, some public schools do not give that information to counselors. Talking with students about finances is difficult, and as Carol Lemmon, counselor at DeSoto High School in Texas, points out, "most students are pretty clueless about their financial situation. Even our middle-class students think they are poor." If possible, meet with parents and explain the income guidelines used to determine eligibility for fee waivers. Explain, too, that the college will verify the information using FAFSA.

Taken from: http://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/applications/fee-waivers

COLLEGE BOARD FEE WAIVERS

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http://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/applications/fee-waivers.

ACCESSING ONLINE APPLICATIONS

On College Application Day, direct students to the SCHOLAR Web site at the following address: http://www.sccango.org.

This site is designed to simplify the application process for multiple South Carolina schools, public and private. All of the institutions that have an asterisk (*) use the same online application service provider, CollegeNET. As previously mentioned, students can use a single login and username for any of the institutions with an asterisk. Aside from the asterisk, students can easily identify they are applying to a CollegeNET school by looking at the URL on the Web page. All CollegeNET schools' online application Web links begin with: https://www.applyweb.com.

If a school does not have an asterisk, then they are using a different online application delivery system. More than likely, students will have to create different usernames and passwords for these applications. A good rule of thumb is to advise your students to create similar usernames and passwords for all of their applications to avoid confusion.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING
CollegeNET ONLINE APPLICATIONS

This only applies to schools that use CollegeNET as an application delivery system.

1. Create your account.

    *   Enter your account information exactly as instructed on the form.
    *   Click the 'Create My Account' button at the bottom of the form.
    *   Write down your username and password for future reference (e.g., when reentering the system).

2. Fill out your form.

    You can complete your form in any order and save your work and come back to it later—even from a different computer!
    *   If your form has more than one page, use the navigation tools found on any of the pages to move forward and backward in the form.
    *   To save what you have done so far without exiting, click the 'Save' button.
    *   To save what you have done so far and exit (you will be taken to your Activity Log), click the 'Finish Session' or 'Save and Exit' button.
    *   To reaccess your form to continue working on it, return to the form menu, select the form, and enter your username and password when prompted.
    *   Typically, if a field is required, it will be noted with an asterisk (*).
    *   In most cases, each screen will indicate if information is missing or incomplete. You will be required to correct or complete the information before continuing
        to the next screen.

    All of your saves and transmissions are logged in your Activity Log for your review.

3. Make corrections to your data.

    You may see a Data Correction Page when you move from page to page, or when you submit the form.

    A Data Correction Page appears if you have omitted a required field or entered data incorrectly. Changes you need to make appear in red text. Simply enter the correct data, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click the appropriate button.

4. Submit the form.

    Check your form carefully. When you are satisfied with it and are ready to send it to us, click the 'Send' button at the bottom of the last page. This saves your data in its final form and takes you to the payment page where you pay your form fee online.

    Your form is not sent to us until you pay your form fee and it is authorized (step 5).

5. Pay your form fee online.

    On the payment page, you can pay your form fee by debit/credit card or check (U.S. bank accounts only).

    If you are paying by debit or credit card:

    *   Provide all information, including the complete credit card number, expiration date, and card billing information.
    *   Click the 'Submit This Information' button.

    If you are paying by check:

    *   Pay by Check is available online (CollegeNET does not accept checks sent by mail) through U.S. bank accounts only.
    *   Please note: In order to ensure accurate processing of your check, there will be a verification period of six business days between the time you submit the electronic check payment and the time this institution receives the form.

    Once payment is authorized, your form is on its way, and you can no longer make changes to it.

    Security Information: Your debit/credit card information is encrypted during transmission from your browser to our server and during payment authorization. None of your debit/credit card information is stored in our database.

6. Check your Activity Log to print a copy of your form or to learn if we have received it.

7. Close your browser program when you are ready to end your Web session. This clears your password and secure connection.

HINTS FOR COMPLETING YOUR FORM

*   Select the appropriate residence and/or citizenship country code using the 'Search' button: click the button and select your country code from the list. It will be entered automatically in the form.
*   Check your form carefully before sending it!
*   There are usually other requirements for admission such as having transcripts, test scores, and/or letters of recommendation sent to us. Be sure to fulfill these requirements in addition to submitting your form.

WEB FORM FEATURES

*   The Web form server stores the information you enter under the private username and password you establish.
*   You do not have to complete a form in one sitting. For example, you can start working on a Web form at your library's computer facility, save your work, access the form at home on your personal computer, and continue working from there. Wherever you have access to the Web, you have access to the information you have saved.
*   When you complete more than one form, common information you provided on the first form is entered automatically in all subsequent forms. For example, if you have entered your name and address on a form and saved it, that information will be entered automatically on the next online form you access (assuming, of course, that the next form also has name and address fields). Also, if you change the information on one form, it is changed on all others.
*   Your data are transmitted securely over the Internet. The information you enter is encrypted and secure

when you save it and when you send it. Although general data collected on the system may be used in statistical studies and reports designed to assist institutions with planning, any information bearing your personal identification is disclosed only to the department to which you send it.

- When you save or transmit form information, a note appears in your Activity Log. You can easily check your Activity Log at any time to see your form activity and to learn when we have acknowledged receipt of your form.

- ***Language taken from www.CollegeNET.com.***

NOW THAT I'VE APPLIED, WHAT'S NEXT?

How do I pay for application fees?

You may be required to pay an application fee for some college applications or you may qualify for a fee waiver to cover the cost of application fees. For further information on fee waivers, speak directly with your school counselor.

If you are required to pay, here are a few payment options:

CHECK

Once you have submitted your online application, you can send a check in the mail to that school. Be sure to include a copy of your confirmation page with your payment.

CREDIT CARD

You can pay with a credit card online. Check to see what cards each school accepts (e.g., Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover). If you decide to pay with a credit card, the following information is required:

- Type of card
- Credit card number
- Expiration date
- Name as it appears on the card
- Security code (the three- or four-digit number on the back of the card)

If you do not wish to submit the application online, you can save it, print it, and mail it in along with your payment.

What about additional information?

Depending on the school, you may be required to submit additional information to complete the application process. They may ask you to submit essays, test scores, and/or transcripts. It is best to find out the application requirements for each school you plan to apply to prior to completing the online application. Do not delay submission of those documents. The sooner you submit them, the sooner you receive a response from the school.

How do I confirm submission of my application?

Once you have completed and submitted your application, you will be directed to a confirmation page. Make sure you print this page for your records, and some schools may require you to submit a signed copy to complete the application process.

When will I hear from the schools?

The schools' admissions offices should contact you through e-mail or by letter once you have submitted all the requirements for the application process. If you do not hear from them within one to two weeks, contact the admissions offices of the schools you applied to and follow up on your application status.

I've applied. Now how do I pay for college?

Worried about paying for college? There are plenty of resources out there to help you make it happen. To learn more about financial aid options that could work for you, visit www.sccango.org/students and click 'Paying for College.'

In order to receive any form of financial aid, you will need to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. You may be eligible for additional aid, so it's a good idea to complete your application form early.

If you're interested in one-on-one assistance completing the FAFSA form, make sure you attend a local College Goal South Carolina event during February. College Goal SC provides assistance in applying for financial aid to families who need it. By delivering help to families in their own communities, College Goal SC helps to ensure that students get the help they need to qualify for financial aid. To learn more about College Goal SC visit www. collegegoalsc.org.

PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

As the student, it is your responsibility to make sure that all of your college applications and all supporting materials are sent to the colleges to which you wish to apply. Your high school is responsible for sending the transcript and a secondary school report (if required). If a teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation, that teacher is responsible for submitting it. BUT you, the student, are responsible for following your school's policy for requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations. Know what you are expected to do!

Listed below is everything that could be required, but you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. There also are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

1. Official Transcript: Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. Other information that might be included on a transcript: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.
2. Standardized Test Scores: SAT or ACT Scores
3. The Application Form: You are responsible for requesting an application form, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online). Many colleges accept The Common Application. No matter what school or what application, these will be important components:
   • Personal and Educational Data (e.g., name, address, phone number, e-mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
   • Honors and Awards
   • Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities
   • Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities (Some colleges allow you to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application.)
   • Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
   • Disciplinary information
   • Application Fee (Many colleges will accept fee waivers—ask a counselor.)
   • Signature
   • For certain majors, you may be required to audition or be asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.
4. Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form: This is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, you are responsible for submitting this form to the college.

   TIP: Usually the person at your school (probably your counselor) who is completing this form asks for information from students and parents ahead of time. If possible, meet with this person before he or she writes a letter of recommendation.

5. Mid-Year Report Form: This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.
6. Teacher Recommendation Form: This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is, the teacher is responsible for sending it. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over this form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges are not only looking for teachers from courses where you have received an A, but from teachers who know you well and can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY: INSTRUCTION SHEET

COMPLETE THE COLLEGE APPLICATION WORKSHEETS

Having this information completed before you start to apply will save a tremendous amount of time when you are completing your college applications.

RESEARCH YOUR COLLEGE OPTIONS

Check out colleges and universities on the College Search feature at www.scpathways.org. There, you can gather detailed information about a variety of college and universities. Use the checklist on the next page to keep track of college admission requirements for your top three colleges.

RESEARCH APPLICATION DEADLINES

While you are researching colleges, find out what deadlines, if any, campuses have for applications. Some schools will not accept applications after a certain date, so if you have a favorite school, make sure to find out early in your search what the application schedule is.

PREPARE FOR APPLICATION FEES

Most colleges require an application fee when you submit an online application. The introduction page to the application will inform you of the fee amount, if any. ***Unless you have a fee waiver from your school counselor, you need to be prepared to enter a credit/debit card number or mail a check once you complete your online application.*** If you think you may be eligible for an application fee waiver, contact your high school counselor.

PREPARE ESSAY AND/OR PERSONAL STATEMENTS

What if you are required to submit an admission essay or personal statement?
Bring your essay(s) with you preloaded on a jump drive so that you can easily copy your essay into your online application. Make sure you have a hard copy as well for back-up. You will be able to upload your essay file or copy and paste it during the online application session.

Complete the College Application Worksheets (found in your Student Resource Guide). This information will help guide you as you prepare to fill out your college application. Keep in mind that some of the information is confidential, so you should keep this document in a safe place. All colleges will not require all information, but you should record it just in case. It's better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it. Please bring your completed College Application Worksheets with you to your appointment to fill out your college application.

If you have any questions, contact your guidance counselor.

COLLEGE APPLICATION WORKSHEET

Write your college application user ID and password here.

User ID _____

Password _____

Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____

Permanent Address (where all mail will be sent) _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

Mobile Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Social Security Number (optional for most colleges) _____

Driver's License Number _____

Date Issued _____

Use this space to write down your credit card information. If you do not wish to write it here, please have it on the day you fill out your college application because you will need it to pay your application fee. You might also want to check with your guidance counselor to see if you are eligible for a fee waiver.

Type of card
Credit card number
Expiration date
Name on card
Security code

Parent/Guardian Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____

Relationship to You _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Please indicate the highest education level completed by Parent/Guardian.

☐ Unknown   ☐ Elementary/Middle School (K-8)   ☐ High School/GED   ☐ 2-Year College*

☐ 4-Year College*   ☐ Graduate School*   Institution* _____ Degree* _____

Parent/Guardian Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____

Relationship to You _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Please indicate the highest education level completed by Parent/Guardian.

☐ Unknown   ☐ Elementary/Middle School (K-8)   ☐ High School/GED   ☐ 2-Year College*

☐ 4-Year College*   ☐ Graduate School*   Institution* _____ Degree* _____

COLLEGE APPLICATION WORKSHEET (CONTINUED)

Name of Current High School _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Date Entering High School _____

Anticipated Graduation Date _____

Please list any other high schools you have attended.

High School Name _____ _____

Mailing Address _____ _____

_____ _____

Phone _____ _____

Dates of Attendance _____ _____

List any colleges you have attended for which you expect to receive college credit.

College Name _____ _____

City, State _____ _____

Dates of Attendance _____ _____

List the courses you are taking during your senior year.
Please indicate any that are Honor, AP, IB, or Dual Enrollment (College Courses)

Fall Semester _____ _____

_____ _____

Spring Semester _____ _____

_____ _____

List any other courses _____
(summer school, online, etc.) _____

_____

SAT Test Date (month/year) _____ _____ _____

Math Score _____ _____ _____

Verbal Score _____ _____ _____

ACT Test Date (month/year) _____ _____ _____

Composite Score _____ _____ _____

COLLEGE APPLICATION WORKSHEET (CONTINUED)

Date of Birth _____   **Place of Birth** _____

Citizenship (check one)   _____   U.S. Citizen

_____   NOT a U.S. citizen, but permanent resident of the U.S.

Enter date of resident status granted   _____

_____   Other, give visa type   _____

If not a U.S. citizen, are you a legal immigrant   _____   Yes
(permanent resident alien of the U.S.?)   _____   No**

**If you answered "no" be prepared to complete the following:

Country of Citizenship   _____

Permanent Residence   _____

Resident Alien Number   _____

Country of Birth   _____

List your extracurricular, community and family activities, and hobbies. Be prepared to include specific events and major accomplishments such as musical or artistic talent to volunteer services.

ACTIVITY	GRADE LEVEL				APPROX TIME SPENT		WHEN?		POSITIONS HELD, HONORS WON, LETTERS EARNED OR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
	9	10	11	12	HOURS/ WEEK	WEEKS/ YEAR	SCHOOL YEAR	SUMMER	

Work Experience

NATURE OF WORK/ POSITION HELD	EMPLOYER	DATES OF EMPLOYMENT	HOURS PER WEEK

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