

ALABAMA COLLEGE APPLICATION CAMPAIGN



SITE COORDINATOR RESOURCE MANUAL

Greetings Alabama College Application Campaign (ALCAC) Site Coordinator:

On behalf of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and our partners, we are excited that your high school is hosting an Alabama College Application Campaign! This Site Coordinator Resource Manual was developed to provide you with important information and resources to assist you in planning and implementing a successful Alabama College Application Campaign. This manual provides information on implementation, organizational planning, and a guidebook/toolkit of resources, checklists, sample letters and schedules. We hope you find this guide useful as you implement strategies to achieve increased college access in your school.

The Alabama College Application Campaign's goal is to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education by assisting high school seniors with the college admissions process and ensuring that each participating student submits at least one admissions application to college. ALCAC encourages all high school students to apply to college early in their senior year.

Alabama College Application Campaign appreciates your school's interest in hosting an event during this Campaign Initiative. Participating schools are requested to complete a registration form to indicate their interest in participating in the ALCAC as a host site and schools will be sent additional information upon receipt of a completed registration form. Each school wishing to participate must complete a registration form to receive campaign materials.

We extend our dedication and commitment to assist you in making this endeavor a success. Please share any information, suggestions, or ideas you may have that will make this event or future events more exciting. You may contact Dr. Monica P. Mack, Education Specialist, if you have questions or need additional information by email at monica.mack@alsde.edu or by phone at 334-694-4768.

Joining the Alabama College Application Campaign

About the Campaign

The Alabama College Application Campaign (ALCAC) is a statewide initiative of high schools with a goal to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue postsecondary education. The purpose is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits at least one college application.

The Alabama College Application Campaign Week will be held October 7-11, 2024 at participating high schools. All high schools interested in participating are asked to complete a registration form to indicate their interest in joining ALCAC as a host site in 2024. The ALCAC coordinator will follow up with your school upon receipt of a completed registration form to confirm your school's participation in the program.

Registration link: [Alabama Goes to College Registration](#)

Responsibilities of Participating High Schools

High schools implementing a successful College Application Campaign at their school will include the following as part of their initiative:

- ❖ Host a program during the school day that is open to any student interested in applying with a focus on engaging first-generation students, low-income students, and students who may otherwise not apply to college. The Alabama initiative is week-long and schools may host events virtually or face-to-face on any day(s) during that week.
- ❖ Leverage support of the school team to ensure that students are prepared to participate in the event (essays are completed prior to the event; students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.).
- ❖ Engage the local community, families, and others through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising the program.
- ❖ Create a college-going culture within the school through a variety of approaches – some suggestions are included in this guide.
- ❖ Collect data as requested by the State Coordinator including, but not limited to, the number of students participating, and the number of applications submitted.
- ❖ Follow up with students after the event to ensure applications submitted are complete (transcripts, college entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, etc.).

❖ **Campaign Resources for your High School**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18henshEMWfdPEOLYSKOV2GkGCRA-uJVb?usp=sharing>

For questions about the Alabama College Application Campaign, contact

Dr. Monica P. Mack, Education Specialist

Alabama State Department of Education

Email: monica.mack@alsde.edu

Phone: 334-694-4768

Implementing a College Application Campaign: Overview

Campaign Implementation at the School-Level: Site Coordinator

Each high school will identify a site coordinator, who will be responsible for implementing the campaign locally. ALCAC has provided tools and resources that your high school can use or customize to your school's program.

Planning and Communicating the Campaign

It is important that your school communicate this opportunity to students, their families, and your local community. Suggestions for communicating and marketing Alabama's College Application Campaign are available in this manual and on ACAC's website, <https://equityinlearning.act.org/acac> under Resources.

Volunteers are a critical component of any school's College Application Campaign. To assist your school in identifying volunteers from your local community, informational letters intended for community partners and families of your seniors are included in this guide.

It is important to begin planning your program early. A timeline to guide the planning of your school's campaign is provided in this manual.

SITE COORDINATOR CAMPAIGN EVENT TIMELINE

Fall

8 weeks prior to event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Communicate the opportunity to students, families and the community using the information letters available in this resource guide.
- ❖ Make sure students, teachers, and staff are aware of the ALCAC.
- ❖ Program Reserve the computer lab/computer facilities for your event.
- ❖ Recruit volunteers to assist with your event! (sample letters are available in guide)

7 weeks prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Arrange a schedule for your event, including which groups or classes of students will participate at what time.
- ❖ Encourage students to begin career, major and college research.
- ❖ Review supplemental activities found in this guide and determine which activities you want to use to make your school's event fun and exciting.
- ❖ Encourage teachers to begin connecting classroom lessons to your Alabama College Application Campaign. *Direct Your Future* lesson plans on ACPS-Kuder are a good match for many of the ALCAC pre-activities and are available at no cost.

6 weeks prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Provide eligible students with application fee waiver information. (Examples are ACT, SAT and NACAC)
- ❖ Begin implementing Alabama College Application Campaign event supplemental activities. Recommendations are included within this resource guide.

- ❖ Contact the Mayor's office to have your College Application Day(s) proclaimed. If other schools in your district are hosting events, coordinate with them on the request. A template has been provided.

5 weeks prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Discuss the research students have done and where they would like to apply. We recommend that each student apply to at least four colleges, with the goal of submitting between 4-6 applications.
- ❖ Confirm that computer labs/computer facilities are reserved for the event and that your school's technology coordinator is ready and willing to serve should any technology issues arise.

4 weeks prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Create a schedule for volunteers, considering the availability of your volunteers, as well as breaks and lunch.
- ❖ Inform parents of your school's ALCAC and solicit their help in preparing their children.
- ❖ Inform students they should start on any required essays or personal statements.
- ❖ Determine how your school will collect data to track the number of students who participated and the number of applications submitted. Contact your ALCAC state coordinator for guidance and state data collection requirements.

3 weeks prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Remind families of your ALCAC using email, phone tree, school newsletter, website and/or social media to let them know their students may need their help to prepare.
- ❖ Remind students to continue working on any required essays or personal statements.
- ❖ Send a message to your volunteers to give them the details of your event, including when/where to meet.
- ❖ Log-in to your ACPS web portal to confirm that all seniors have now created an account. Follow up with seniors as needed.

2 weeks prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Begin implementing ALCAC event supplemental activities.
- ❖ Remind teachers, administrators, and counselors of the ALCAC schedule and ensure all seniors will have the opportunity to participate.
- ❖ Contact the ALCAC State Coordinator if you have additional questions.

1 week prior to your event, Week of: _____

- ❖ Make an announcement to remind students that the event is next week and that they will need to:
 - ❖ Know where they would like to apply.
 - ❖ Have a plan for application fees and to speak with school counselor if they believe they qualify for a fee waiver.
 - ❖ Remind students to confirm required essays or personal statements have been proofed and in final version, and to bring to the event.
 - ❖ Gather the information needed to complete applications. Some information may need to come from parents (residency information, social security number, etc.).
- ❖ Make final preparations for your event.
- ❖ Prepare “I Applied to College”! bulletin board for participating students to sign.
- ❖ Encourage school staff to wear college clothing on the day(s) of the event.
- ❖ Alert your local media about your event. A press release template is included in this resource guide
- ❖ Send volunteers a reminder about the event a day or two prior to your event.
- ❖ Place a reminder about the event on your school’s website home page.

Your Alabama College Application Week!

- ❖ Enjoy your college application event!
- ❖ Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support.
- ❖ Let volunteers know what their role is for the day.
- ❖ Eligible students should register for their FSA ID.
- ❖ Participating students should “sign-out” of the event and provide the requested information.

After Your Event

- ❖ Remind students to complete the college application process by ensuring they submit their transcripts, letters of recommendation, and/or college entrance exam scores to the institutions to which they applied
- ❖ Submit any requested data to your State Coordinator.
- ❖ Thank your volunteers. A sample thank you letter is included in this resource guide.
- ❖ Follow-up with the school team to share your success!

SITE COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

Use the checklist below to assist you as you implement a College Application event. The checklist includes the activities outlined above.

Pre-event preparation: First steps

- Print and Review Alabama College Application Campaign resource materials
- Identify and reserve site for the College Application event
- Add College Application event to school calendar
- Identify a School Team to build support and assist with tasks; use Resources Audit available in this guide to identify members of team
- Host school team meeting to discuss implementation of program at your school
- Ensure you have adequate counts of ACT, SAT, and/or NACAC fee waivers

Communicate opportunity to students, their families, and the local community

- By information letters
- By phone blasts/text messages
- By posting information on school website, school newsletter, school marquee, social media
- Pre-event press release

Prepare students for the event

- Focus on activities that encourage students to research and identify schools that are the best fit
- Sponsor and/or support participation in college fairs or college visits
- Implement college exploration and preparation assignments in classrooms
- Identify and meet with students eligible for application fee waivers

Implement school-wide activities to build awareness and enthusiasm

- College t-shirt/sweatshirt days
- College wall bulletin boards
- Door decorating contests
- Morning announcements
- Guest speakers
- Parent/Student Nights
- Engage underclassmen in school's College Application Campaign event

Get volunteers involved to assist with the event

- Communicate with volunteers (letter and/or email)
- Assign tasks

HOLD COLLEGE APPLICATION EVENT!

- Ensure students receive a 10 Steps document before they begin applying
- Ensure students register for the FSA ID
- Ensure students sign-out

Post-event follow-up

- Write thank you letters to volunteers
- Analyze results from student sign-out sheet, submit to state coordinator if requested
- Host post-event debrief with school team
- Release post-event press release
- Follow-up with students to ensure they complete the college admissions and financial aid application processes
- Host College and Career Decision Day celebration

Student Instructions on Day of Event

Congratulations! You are taking the first step necessary for going to college – applying! Alabama College Application Week Campaign is a program designed to assist you with this process. Be aware, there are several things you will need to do after today to complete the college application process. Ask your counselor about FAFSA information.

The college and financial application process in 10 Steps!

Step 1: If you are applying online, go to Alabama Colleges and Universities website and find the colleges to which you want to apply. Check with your school counselor or volunteer if you are unsure. If you are not applying to college online, get a hard copy of the admissions application from your school counselor.

Step 2: If you think you qualify for an application fee waiver – talk to your school counselor.

Step 3: Complete the application(s) to the colleges and universities to which you want to apply.

Step 4: Make note of any additional items you need to submit with your application (essay, transcripts, SAT or ACT scores, recommendation letters).

Step 5: Print out a copy of your confirmation page if you applied online. If you are applying through a paper application, talk to your school counselor about how to make a copy of your application. Keep the confirmation page or a copy of the application for your records!

Step 6: Register for your FSA ID – you will need this to complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid form early October. Many grants, loans, and scholarships will require that you submit a FAFSA, so this is a very important step. Please encourage your students to use a personal email address when creating your FSA ID, not your school or work email address.

Go here to register for your FSA ID: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

You will need your social security number, your mailing address, and an email address to complete the process. REMEMBER YOUR FSA ID! Write it down if that will help you remember it and keep it in a safe place!

Step 7: After you submit your college application and register for your FSA ID, be sure to submit the Alabama College Application Week Campaign student survey. Your feedback is extremely important to us.

Step 8: Complete the student sign-out sheet before you leave the computer lab. You will need to list the colleges you applied to and whether you completed the FSA ID process.

Step 9: Be sure to get the handouts provided by your school after you sign-out!

Step 10: Follow-up! Make sure you submit any additional information the colleges you applied to require. This could include recommendation letters, test scores, and high school transcripts. Also, the next important step in the process is completing your FAFSA. You already have your FSA ID, make sure you submit your FAFSA - it is available in December!

Congratulations! You are on your way!

Application Fee Waivers

Who is eligible?

Typically, fee waivers are available to students for whom the college application fees would create a financial burden or hardship. Students who were eligible for fee waivers to college entrance exams, such as the SAT or ACT, are usually also eligible for college application fee waivers.

Who accepts fee waivers?

This information will be provided by the counselors at the various schools.

What fee waivers are available?

There are three types of fee waivers typically accepted by colleges and universities, but it is important to note that not all colleges and universities will accept fee waivers. Students or school counselors should confirm with the admissions office at specific institutions to ensure fee waivers are accepted.

ACT Fee Waiver

ACT provides a fee waiver application in their *ACT User Handbook for Educators* publication, link below. Students who are eligible for a fee waiver to the ACT college entrance exam are also eligible for a college application fee waiver. School counselors can order these forms and sign-off on student eligibility. Students must also sign the form. Fee waiver information may be found here: <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT-UserHandbook.pdf>

College Board Fee Waiver

The College Board states that students who have received a College Board fee waiver for the SAT or the SAT subject tests may also be eligible for up to four college application fee waivers. School counselors should receive these “Request for Waiver of College Application Fee” forms as part of the SAT Program fee-waiver materials shipped to them in the summer. The College Board indicates that these can be distributed to students as necessary. If your school needs additional forms, call the Educator Helpline at 888-SAT-HELP (728-4357).

More information on the College Board fee waiver can be found here:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers>

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Fee Waiver

This fee waiver can be downloaded from NACAC's website, provided below. Students must complete their portion of the fee waiver request and a school counselor or TRIO representative must verify that a student is eligible to use the form (a list of eligibility requirements are provided on the NACAC website and on the fee waiver request – students must meet only one of the requirements to be eligible). NACAC recommends that students receive no more than four fee waivers for the college application process. Additional information on the NACAC fee waiver can be found on their website here:

<https://www.nacacnet.org/student/fee-waivers/>

Resource Materials

Alabama College Application Week – Planning Committee Audit

The Alabama College Application Campaign held at participating high schools is a collaborative initiative. As such, engaging education partners from the local community is highly recommended at the school-level. This worksheet is intended to assist your school in identifying potential partners to assist with the planning and implementation of your school’s College Application Campaign. The list is not exhaustive and other key stakeholders and initiatives in your community should be included in the College Application Campaign as determined by your school’s leadership. Keep in mind when planning for the engagement of your school team, you should follow all district and school policies regarding non-school personnel visiting, volunteering, or otherwise assisting with your school’s program.

SCHOOL PARTNERS

Use the table below to identify potential education partners in your community for your College Application Campaign event. Space has been provided at the bottom of the table for you to add additional partners, if needed.

Potential Partners	Name of Contact	Email Address	Phone Number
Admissions Representative from Local College			
Local Business Leader			
Local Chamber of Commerce			
Community-Based College Access Initiative			
Faith-Based Community Representative			
Non-Profit Representative			
PTA or Parent Representative			
Student Representative			
Financial Aid Representative from Local College			
Other			



Alabama College Application Campaign (ALCAC) Student Sign-Out Sheet

Site Coordinators: The following sign-out sheet allows you to collect student application information in one place before students exit the event. You can modify this form to meet your event needs, but ensure you collect the three required data points of the campaign:

- (1) Total number of students participating in this event
- (2) Total number of applications submitted
- (3) Total number of seniors

You will need to make copies of this document to ensure you have enough space for all students to provide their information.



Student/Family Information Letter (SAMPLE)

(School Logo)
(School Address)

September 2024

Dear Students and Families,

During the week of October 7-11, 2024, the Alabama State Department of Education in collaboration with Alabama Possible will be sponsoring Alabama College Application Week. During this week, all seniors expected to graduate in 2025 will be encouraged to apply for admission to at least one 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 purpose of this day is to acquaint students with the college application process and to communicate the importance of applying to college. Information about completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will also be made available during the event. There is a College Application Worksheet which we encourage students to complete prior to the event. Having this Worksheet completed and available at the College Application event will allow students to quickly and easily complete college applications.

We anticipate that students and their families will need to work together in gathering the information listed in the College Application Worksheet. Families are welcome to visit (Name of your high school) on _____ to assist their student during the application process. In addition, if family members are interested in volunteering or serving as a guest speaker during this event, please let me know. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of college applications, or distribute information regarding financial aid opportunities.

If you have any questions, please contact (Site Coordinator Name), (Site Coordinator's Title) at (Site Coordinator's number). Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative.

Sincerely,

Name of Site Coordinator
Title

Alabama Resolution (SAMPLE)

RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING October 7-11, 2024, AS ALABAMA COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK

WHEREAS, all students must have an opportunity to reach their full potential and to realize their lifelong aspirations; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates 90 percent of our nation’s upcoming 21st Century careers will require employees to have postsecondary experience; and

WHEREAS, the college application process may be a barrier that could keep some high school students from pursuing postsecondary education—because of an absence of information or support; and

WHEREAS, obtaining a postsecondary degree is linked to higher income, better health, and even increased community involvement; and

WHEREAS, to celebrate *Alabama College Application Week* special activities, official proclamation ceremonies, and other events have been planned state-wide; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, only 44 percent of adults in Alabama’s working population (between the ages of 25-64) have obtained a two-year or four-year degree or an industry credential; and

WHEREAS, if this current trend continues, it is estimated that about 51 percent of adults in Alabama will hold a college degree in 2025; and

WHEREAS, this year over 200 Alabama’s local high schools will be participating in this event, which is focused on preparing students for the exciting opportunities of the 21st Century; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama College Application Campaign is designed to increase the number of students that are applying to and ultimately enrolling in college with a particular focus on first-generation and low-income students; and

WHEREAS, in Alabama Achieves a prepared graduate is partially defined as possessing the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a two- or four-year college, trade school, and technical school without the need for remediation; and

WHEREAS, in the Class of 2023, more than half of Alabama high school seniors applied for financial aid services and completed the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA); and

WHEREAS, this celebration will also highlight the importance of the “college and career readiness” concept, which focuses on creating a *seamless transition* between students leaving high school, entering college, and moving into the workforce; and

WHEREAS, the State Superintendent of Education recommends approval; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education does hereby proclaim October 7-11, 2024, as *Alabama College Application Week* and encourages local boards of education, schools, business professionals, and local educational organizations to participate in this celebration through activities that demonstrate the importance of Alabama’s students achieving their aspirations of academic excellence and personal achievement.

I, (Mayor’s Name) do hereby declare _____ Alabama College Application Campaign in (city) and encourage all seniors to take advantage of the assistance provided through this initiative.



Community Information Letter (SAMPLE)

(School Logo)

(School Address)

September 2024

Dear Community Member,

During the week of October 7-11, 2024, the Alabama State Department of Education will be sponsoring Alabama College Application Week. During this week, all seniors expected to graduate in 2025, will be encouraged to apply for admission to at least one 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 purpose of this day is to acquaint students with the college application process and to communicate the importance of applying to college. Information about completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will also be made available during the event.

(Name of your high school) will be hosting our College Application Campaign on October 7-11, 2024, to assist their students during the application process. We welcome the community to be a part of the program. If you are interested in volunteering or guest speaking during the event, please let me know. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities.

If you have any questions, please contact (Site Coordinator Name), (Site Coordinator's Title) at (Site Coordinator's number). Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative.

Sincerely,

Name of Site Coordinator

Title

Phone Blast Message (SAMPLE)

This is a friendly reminder that (Name of High School) will be hosting a College Application Campaign October 7-11, 2024. We encourage all seniors to apply to at least one college if they haven't already done so. Students should come prepared to apply by completing the College Application Worksheet. If you have any questions, please contact (Site Coordinator Name), (Site Coordinator's Title) at (Site Coordinator's number). Thank you in advance for your support.



Sample Press Release

(School Logo or Letterhead)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: (Name of Site Coordinator)

(School name)

(School address)

(Phone number)

(Email of contact person)

(High school website)

Alabama College Application Week to be held October 7-11, 2024, at

(Name of High School)

(Name of Your High School) will participate in Alabama College Application Week sponsored by Alabama State Department of Education October 7-11, 2024.

As part of Alabama college access initiative, (Name of Your High School) will work with its seniors to complete and submit at least one college application.

The goal of the program is to have more students apply to college early in their senior year. During this event, students may apply to participating community colleges, independent colleges, and public universities in which they are interested.

(Name of Site Coordinator or School Principal), Alabama College Application Campaign Site Coordinator for (Name of Your High School), expects more than (Insert Number) seniors to participate with the help of (Insert Number) volunteers from (Insert school staff, administration, college and community resources, and others who are assisting).

This initiative is part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a national initiative that is an effort of the ACT Center for Equity in Learning. As of the 2022 campaign year, over 3.6 million students have been served and over 5.8 million college applications were submitted.

For more information: (Insert website link or an email address) or

Contact: (Name of Site Coordinator)

Phone: (Site Coordinator's phone number)

Find a teacher, administrator, or other adult in your school for whom the following statements about college experiences are true. Ask that person to sign the box that contains their true statement. Up to 5 people may sign your sheet twice. Five in a row wins – horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

HUMAN BINGO CARD

Never thought they would go to college	Went to a public university	Had a job while in college	Lived in a dorm	Played a varsity sport while in college
Had an internship	Graduated in 4 years	Was the first in their family to go to college	Went to a private college	Took out loans to help pay for college
Studied on a Saturday night while they were in college	Changed their major at least one time	FREE SPACE	Received a scholarship to help pay for college	Went to a party during college
Belonged to a fraternity or sorority	Was a member of the student government association	Studied overseas while in college	Transferred from one college to another	Went more than 500 miles away from home
Lived at home during college	Went to a community college	Was in college for more than 4 years	Belonged to a student group	Did scientific research

Educators: The purpose of Human Bingo is two-fold:

1. to demonstrate to students the variety of college experiences that adults in the school have, and
 2. to reinforce that adults in their schools are “ready resources” for college information.
- This activity can take 1-2 weeks. Credit for this activity goes to the Oregon GEAR UP and Washington GEAR UP programs. If you’d like to create more than one bingo board, please use the blank one below.

HUMAN BINGO CARD

		FREE SPACE		

MATERIALS

The Alabama College Application Campaign has created materials to help your high school make their Alabama College Application Week successful and special. These materials are available upon request if you have registered for the campaign as well as submitted your campaign data from the previous school year. These materials include:

“I applied to College!” stickers - Each senior completing an application in your school’s Alabama College Application event will be provided with an “ I Applied to College!” sticker prior to leaving the event. These stickers are a way for students to be congratulated on their accomplishment and for them to share with their classmates that they applied to college.



“Ask me about Alabama College Application!” buttons - Each staff member in your school may receive a staff button. These buttons are a way for staff to be identified and to assist students in the process of completing applications.



Alabama College Application Campaign Posters - The posters are a great way for your school to advertise your ALCAC event. We encourage schools to hang the posters in their schools the week

prior to the event. This will encourage students to start thinking about their participation. Each school may input their information to complete the date, time and place of their event.



