

GEORGIA APPLY TO COLLEGE

SITE COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

Sponsored By
Georgia Student Finance Commission

Georgia Apply to College Initiative Supporters
University System of Georgia
Technical College System of Georgia
Georgia Independent College Association
Communities in Schools
Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education

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WELCOME TO GEORGIA APPLY TO COLLEGE

Greetings Georgia Apply to College Site Coordinator!

The Georgia Apply to College Initiative is excited that your high school is interested in holding a Georgia Apply to College (GAC) event! Whether your school will be holding an official or unofficial event, we hope you will find the information in this Handbook helpful as you plan.

Georgia Apply to College is sponsored by the Georgia Student Finance Commission and supported by Communities in Schools, the Georgia Department of Education, the Georgia Independent College Association, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia. GAC is also endorsed by the Georgia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (GACRAO) and each year since the program's inception, the Governor has issued a proclamation for the event.

Georgia Apply to College has the *goal* of providing all Georgia high school seniors with the opportunity to apply to college using **GAfutures.org**, with a *focus* on providing assistance to first generation and economically disadvantaged students as they navigate the college application process. Georgia Apply to College also has the goal of encouraging all high school students to apply earlier in their senior year.

This Site Coordinator Handbook has been developed to provide you with information and resources to help you plan and hold a successful event. The Handbook includes information such as Timelines and Checklists, tips and hints for holding a successful event, sample communications to make spreading the word about your event quick and easy, and sample supplemental activities that you may wish to use to make your event exciting and special for your students, as well as other important information.

Thank you again for your school's interest in Georgia Apply to College! The Georgia Student Finance Commission is dedicated to assisting you in making your school's event a success. If there is anything we can do to assist or if you have suggestions for future GAC events, please don't hesitate to contact us by email at gac@gsfc.org or by phone at 770.724.9065.

The Georgia Apply to College Initiative

TIMELINES AND CHECKLISTS

The Timelines and Checklists are designed to help Site Coordinators stay on-track as they prepare to hold a successful Georgia Apply to College event. This Handbook includes both a basic and a detailed version of the timeline and checklist. Site Coordinators are encouraged to utilize which ever version best meets their needs.

Basic Timeline and Checklist

- Includes only the most basic information
- Not meant to be a stand-alone planning guide for your event
- For more information about any of the items, please refer to the Detailed Timeline and Checklist or the Site Coordinator Handbook

Detailed Timeline and Checklist

- Provides more detail about each step of the process
- Includes additional references about where to find additional information

Since events are held throughout the month of November, both versions of the Timeline and Checklist are designed to be customized with your school's dates. Each section has a label that denotes the amount of time until your event, for example, *8 weeks prior*, and has a space for you to write down the dates that are applicable to your scheduled event date.

BASIC TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

<u>REQUIRED TRAINING</u>	Review the Site Coordinator online training. Completion of training is required for all participating schools, even those that previously participated.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 weeks prior to your event: Week of: _____	Print and review the current GAC Site Coordinator Handbook.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Establish a school team to assist with your school’s GAC preparations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Add your GAC event to your school’s master calendar.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reserve the computer facilities for your event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Confirm that your school’s information is listed correctly on Gafutures.org .	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Begin recruiting volunteers for your event (use <i>Sample Volunteer Recruitment Communication</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensure seniors have created Gafutures accounts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Encourage students to begin college research. We recommend using the College Search on Gafutures .	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Review supplemental activities found in this Handbook and determine which activities you may wish to use to make your school’s event fun and exciting!	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Encourage teachers to begin connecting lessons to your Georgia Apply to College event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 weeks prior to your event: Week of: _____	Provide eligible students with application fee waiver information (for example, College Board or ACT fee waivers).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Verify with your students that they have created a Gafutures account.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inform parents of your school’s GAC event, and let them know that their students may need their help to prepare (use <i>Sample Parent/Guardian Communication</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Continue recruiting volunteers for your event if additional volunteers are needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 weeks prior to your event: Week of: _____	Follow up with those students who have not created accounts and those who have not begun their college research.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Begin Georgia Apply to College suggested supplemental activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Confirm that computer facilities are reserved for the event and that your school’s technology coordinator is available for troubleshooting on the day of the event, just in case!	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Basic Timeline and Checklist Page 1</i>		
4 weeks prior to your event:	Create a schedule for your volunteer coverage, taking into account the availability of your volunteers, as well as breaks and lunch.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Recruit additional volunteers to fill any holes in your volunteer coverage schedule if needed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3 weeks prior to your event:</p>	<p>Customize the <i>Sample Volunteer Confirmation Communication</i>. Send it to your volunteers to give them the details of your event, including when/where to meet.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Verify with your students that they have created a GAfutures account.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2 weeks prior to your event:</p>	<p>Remind teachers, counselors and administrators of the GAC schedule and ensure all seniors will have the opportunity to participate.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Be sure that you have received the GAC materials delivered to your school (stickers, buttons, and posters) if coordinated with your GSFC Outreach Representative. Contact gac@gsfc.org and/or your GSFC Outreach Representative if you have not received them.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1 week prior to your event:</p>	<p>Make an announcement to remind students that the event is next week, and remind them that they will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know where they would like to apply • Have a plan for application fees (students w/o payment info may save completed applications and submit from home) • Write required essays or personal statements and 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.). 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Make final preparations for your event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Make announcement encouraging school staff to wear college clothing on the day of the event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Alert your local media about your event by customizing the <i>Sample Pre-Event Media Release</i> found in the Site Coordinator Handbook. Consider inviting the media to attend your event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Week of: _____</p>	<p>Send <i>Sample Final Volunteer Reminder Communication</i> to volunteers a day or two prior to your event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Your Georgia Apply to College Day!</p>	<p><i>Enjoy your Georgia Apply to College Event!</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Your Georgia Apply to College Day!</p>	<p>Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let them know what their role is for the day. • Ensure they receive an <i>Ask Me, I Can Help Sticker</i>. • Give them with a printed copy of the day’s schedule (include lunch info) • Let them know where they may leave their personal items • Let them know where they can find the nearest restroom 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Your Georgia Apply to College Day!</p>	<p>Welcome each group of seniors to your Georgia Apply to College event! Inform them that their task is to complete an application for admission using GAfutures and let them know the volunteers are there to help.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Basic Timeline and Checklist Page 2

DETAILED TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

Early Preparations	<p>It is never too early for students to begin exploring their postsecondary educational options. We encourage all high schools to take advantage of the Georgia Department of Education’s Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) materials available on GeorgiaStandards.org in the Resources/Videos section. The TAA materials are designed to help and encourage 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students to consider and plan for their education and career options following high school.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Begin thinking about how your school will prepare students to participate in your Apply to College event. All seniors will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and/or update GAfutures accounts • Determine where they would like to apply by completing college research • Gather information needed to successfully complete an application <p>Please review the <i>Guide for Preparing your Students</i> for further information and ideas.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 weeks prior to your event: Week of:	<p>Print and review the current GAC Site Coordinator Handbook.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Establish a school team to assist with your school’s GAC preparations. Remember, the more faculty and staff that are involved, the more likely that your event will be a huge success and the less work that will be required of any one person to make it happen!</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Add your GAC event to your school’s master calendar.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Reserve the computer facilities for the date and time of your designated GAC event. Most schools utilize their media center and/or computer lab for their GAC event. Each student will need a minimum of 45 minutes – one hour on a computer in order to complete an application. All seniors should be provided an opportunity to participate.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Confirm that your school is listed correctly GAfutures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School name, county and event date on the main page • Contact information in the Get Involved as a Volunteer section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site Coordinator name, phone number, and email address ○ Including this information is optional, but will help make it easier for interested volunteers to connect with your school. <p>Contact us for changes or additions by emailing gac@gsfc.org.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>Begin coordinating the volunteers for your event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using the <i>Sample Volunteer Recruitment Communication</i> to spread the word about your event. • Keep in mind that the following may be good sources of potential volunteers for your event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local colleges and universities ○ Teachers, counselors, administrators and other school staff ○ Your PTSA ○ Civic organizations ○ Local businesses ○ Your local Chamber of Commerce ○ Partners in Education ○ Parents ○ Former students • We recommend one adult for every 5-6 computers being used during your event. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Begin preparations to publicize your event both inside and outside your school. Consider including information in your school newsletter and on your school website.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>7 weeks prior to your event (continued):</p> <p>Week of:</p>	<p>Arrange your school’s schedule for the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what classes or groups of students will participate in the event and at what times. Be sure all impacted teachers are aware of the event and will provide ALL seniors with the opportunity to participate. At a minimum, we recommend 45 minutes to 1 hour for each session in order for students to have sufficient time to complete their online applications. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Begin working with seniors to ensure they have created a GAfutures account prior to the event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Encourage your students to use the College Search on GAfutures. See the <i>Guide for Preparing Your Students</i> for more information and ideas</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Review the GAC supplemental activities found in this Handbook and determine which ones you might wish to utilize. Many of the supplemental activities are low cost, require minimal work to implement, and are a great way to make your GAC event a special experience for your seniors!</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Encourage teachers to begin connecting lessons to your Georgia Apply to College event. For example, English teachers may consider incorporating college essay writing activities into their lessons.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>6 weeks prior to your event:</p> <p>Week of:</p> <hr/>	<p>Discuss application fee waiver options for eligible students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage eligible students to meet with their counselor to discuss fee waiver options for which they may qualify. • Remember, students participating in Georgia Apply to College are responsible for paying any application fee charged by the college/university, or submitting a fee waiver accepted by the college/university, such the College Board or ACT fee waiver. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Verify with your students that they have created a GAfutures account.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Inform parents of your school’s GAC event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send parents/guardians the <i>Sample Parent/Guardian Communication</i> letting them know about your school’s Georgia Apply to College event, and letting them know that their students may need assistance as they prepare. Notify them if you will be offering any information sessions to help them assist their children in preparing to apply. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Continue recruiting volunteers for your event. Remember, schedules fill up quickly!</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>5 weeks prior to your event:</p> <p>Week of:</p> <hr/>	<p>Remind students to create their GAfutures account. Follow up with those students who have not created accounts, or those who have not begun their college research.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Begin Georgia Apply to College suggested supplemental activities. Sample supplemental activities are found in this Handbook. These activities help generate excitement among your students and staff, and are designed to be fun!</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Confirm that computer facilities are reserved for the event. Confirm that the technology coordinator is available for trouble shooting on the day of the event, just in case!</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4 weeks prior to your event:</p> <p>Week of:</p> <hr/>	<p>Create a volunteer coverage schedule. Keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of the volunteers • Number of students participating during each time slot • Don’t forget to factor in lunch and other breaks for your volunteers 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Recruit additional volunteers as needed to fill any holes in your volunteer coverage schedule.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>3 weeks prior to event date:</p> <p>Week of:</p> <hr/>	<p>Customize the <i>Sample Volunteer Communication</i> and send it to your scheduled volunteers. Be sure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let all volunteers know when and where to meet on the day of your event. • Encourage all volunteers to become familiar with the Volunteer Handbook located on the <i>Get Involved as a Volunteer</i> section of GAfutures. • Encourage all volunteers to view the online volunteer training before your event. The volunteer training will be made available on the Get Involved as a Volunteer section of the website in the fall. The Volunteer Training will provide important information your volunteers will need to provide assistance to your students and to have a positive GAC experience. • Encourage volunteers to wear college clothing and comfortable shoes. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Verify with your students that they have created a GAfutures account.</p> <p>Remind seniors that they should...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be prepared to pay the online application fee, if required by the college to which they are applying, or obtain the appropriate fee waiver from their counselor prior to the event. More information regarding application fees and fee waivers can be found in this Handbook. ▪ Bring essays and/or personal statements saved to a disk on the day of the event, if required by the college to which they are applying. ▪ Complete the <i>Student Prep Sheet</i> and bring it with them to the event. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2 weeks prior to event date:</p> <p>Week of:</p> <hr/>	<p>Remind teachers, counselors and administrators of the GAC schedule, and ensure that all seniors will be given the opportunity to participate.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Encourage your school staff to wear college clothing on the day of your event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Gather the GAC materials to be used the day of your event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I applied buttons</i> - to be provided to each participating student the day of your event ○ <i>Ask Me About My College buttons</i> – school staff can wear the buttons for activities leading up to your event, and could wear them during the event ○ <i>Ask Me, I Can Help stickers</i> – to be worn by each volunteer the day of your event ○ Posters – be sure to hang these up around your school prior to your event! 	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>1 week prior to your event date:</p> <hr/> <p>Week of:</p>	<p>Make an announcement to remind students that the event is next week, and remind them that they will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know where they would like to apply • Have a plan for application fees (students w/o payment info may save completed applications and submit from home) • Write required essays or personal statements and 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.). 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Make announcement encouraging school staff to wear college clothing the day of the event.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Make final preparations for your event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print any materials you are planning to use during your event. See the Hints and Tips section of this Handbook for examples. • Confirm your event schedule with administration, teachers, IT staff, etc. as needed. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Alert your local media about the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize the <i>Pre-Event Sample Media Release</i> found in this Handbook. • Consider inviting the media to attend your event. There is nothing like photographers and videographers to get your school excited about your event! 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Send the <i>Sample Volunteer Final Reminder Communication</i> to volunteers a day or two prior to your event. Be sure to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any last minute instructions or changes • Where to park • Arrival time and location • Who to contact if they have problems getting to the event 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Your Georgia Apply to College Day!</p>	<p><i>Enjoy your Georgia Apply to College event!</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support! Ensure they receive an <i>Ask Me, I Can Help</i> Sticker. Let them know what their role is during the day of the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students sign in to GAfutures.org • Guide seniors through the college application process • Share their college experiences • Inspire seniors to bigger and better things <p>Be sure to give them a printed copy of the schedule for the day so they know what times students will be participating and what time they may break for lunch. If your volunteers must leave the high school for lunch, consider providing them with a list of local restaurants or a map. Remember, some of your volunteers may have traveled a distance to support your event and may not be familiar with your area. Ensure they know where they may place their personal items and where the public rest rooms are located.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>Welcome each group of seniors to your Georgia Apply to College event!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congratulate them on their decision to apply to college; ▪ Share with them that the expectation for the day is for them to complete at least one college/university application for admission; ▪ Introduce the volunteers and inform the students that the volunteers are there to help them complete their applications; ▪ Direct students to the GAfutures website. We recommend that this be set as the home page on each computer for the duration of the event; ▪ Direct students to the online evaluation form once they've completed their application. GAC is grant-funded and data from the evaluations is critical for helping us secure continued funding; ▪ Provide each student with an <i>I Applied Button</i> as they complete their application(s); ▪ Encourage students to complete their admission file with the college by submitting the necessary supporting documentation, such as a high school transcript and/or test scores to the college. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>After your event</p>	<p>Be sure to say “Thanks” to your volunteers!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sending an email to all volunteers and give them information about the success of your event (how many students participated, how many applications were completed, etc.). • You could also include a link to any news coverage of your event, or a photo taken of the volunteers. • Follow-up with students to be sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those who were unable to submit their application during the event were able to do so following the event. ○ Students complete their admission file with the college by submitting additional documentation such as their high school transcript, test scores, etc. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Following Fall</p>	<p>Provide final report of college acceptances and enrollment to GAC Coordinator by emailing gac@gsfc.org.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VOLUNTEERS

OVERVIEW

College and community volunteers play a key role during Georgia Apply to College events. Volunteers provide assistance at each participating high school by doing things such as:

- Helping students logon to **GAfutures.org**
- Guiding graduating seniors through the college application process
- Handing out “I applied” buttons to students
- Sharing their own college experiences with students
- Inspiring seniors to realize their dreams for the future

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

- It is the responsibility of each high school to recruit and confirm a sufficient number of volunteers to support their event.
- We recommend one adult for every 5-6 computers in use at any one time during a school’s event.
- We recommend that schools use the **Sample Volunteer Recruitment Letter** found in this Handbook to spread the word about their event.
- Keep in mind that the following may be good sources of potential volunteers for your event:
 - *Local colleges and universities*
 - *Local businesses*
 - *Teachers, counselors, administrators and school staff*
 - *Your local Chamber of Commerce*
 - *Your PTSA*
 - *Partners in Education*
 - *Civic organizations*
 - *Parents*
 - *Former students*
- Encourage your volunteers to review the **Volunteer Handbook** which is available on the **Get Involved as a Volunteer** section of the **GAfutures.org**. The information provided in the Volunteer Handbook helps ensure volunteers are prepared to assist students during your Georgia Apply to College event and also helps to ensure your volunteers have a positive GAC experience.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR EVENT

In order to ensure your volunteers have a positive GAC experience, we recommend the following:

- Welcome your volunteers and inform them of their role for the day;
- Inform them of the schedule for the day. Be sure to let them know:
 - When students will be in the labs/media center
 - When they can take breaks and/or break for lunch
- Let them know where they can find the restroom.
- Let them know where they may leave their personal items during the event.
- Consider providing your volunteers with a map of local restaurants if they will be leaving the school for lunch. Remember, some of your volunteers may have traveled a distance for your event and may not be familiar with your area;
- Be sure they know who they should go to if they have a question or need assistance;
- Please be aware that volunteers are not there to run the event or to make sure students stay on task. It is extremely important that a school staff member be present at all times;
- With each new group of participating students, introduce them to the volunteers and let them know the volunteers are there to help them!

MATERIALS

The GAC Committee has created a number of materials to help high schools make their Georgia Apply to College event successful and special. These materials include:

I Applied* buttons** – Each senior participating in your school’s Georgia Apply to College event should be provided with an ***I Applied button prior to leaving the event. The buttons are a way for students to be congratulated on their accomplishment and for them to share with their classmates that they applied to college. Schools may order one button for each student in their senior class.



Ask Me, I Can Help* stickers** – Each volunteer supporting your event should wear an ***Ask Me, I Can Help sticker to let your participating students know that the volunteers are there to assist them as they navigate the college admission process. Each volunteer should be provided a sticker as they check-in for your event. Schools may order 1 sticker for each volunteer they anticipate will be present at their event.



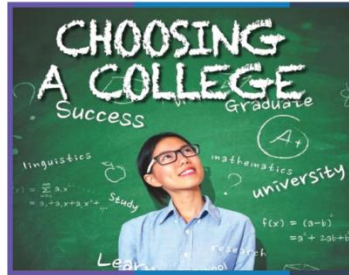
Ask Me about My College* buttons** – The ***Ask Me about My College buttons are a great way to encourage conversations about college at your school. The buttons are a companion material to the College Spirit Day activity found in the ***Site Coordinator Handbook***. By wearing the button and hanging the ***Ask Me About My College*** signs (found in the ***Site Coordinator Handbook***) outside their door, teachers and staff can encourage students to engage in dialogue about college. Schools may order one button for each faculty/staff member who typically interacts with students in their senior class. Since the buttons are reusable, we ask that you encourage you faculty and staff to save their buttons from year to year to minimize the number of new buttons needed each year.



Georgia Apply to College posters – The **Georgia Apply to College** posters are a great way for schools to advertise their upcoming Georgia Apply to College event. We recommend that schools hang the posters around their school at least a week before their event to encourage students to start thinking about their participation.

GEORGIA APPLY TO COLLEGE

What colleges are on your wish list?



Receive college decision guidance and onsite assistance completing your college applications.

Event Location

Event Date

Event Time

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APPLICATION FEES

The colleges and universities in the state vary when it comes to application fees. Some colleges and universities have an application fee, typically ranging from fifteen to sixty dollars, while others do not. For those that do have a fee, some require the student to enter payment information online in order to successfully submit an online application. Others allow the submission of an online application without the entry of payment information but require that the student mail in the application confirmation screen along with the appropriate payment. Each college typically provides information regarding their application fee in the Quick Facts section of the Overview page in the College Search on **GAfutures**.

In addition, some colleges accept fee waivers, such as the College Board or ACT fee waivers, while others may not. For this reason, it is important that students spend a little time researching their college of interest prior to your school's Georgia Apply to College event so they know what to expect. Specific instructions regarding how to apply using a fee waiver are determined by each college and can typically be found on the college's Application Information screen, which is the first screen students see when they begin an application for a college, or on the Admissions website of the college.

PAYING THE APPLICATION FEE

- Students applying to a college or university that requires the entry of payment information to submit an online application may:
 - Enter that information, if they have access to that information at school, and submit their application during the event. Students who do not have access to a credit card may wish to consider purchasing a prepaid gift card, such as a Visa gift card, sufficient to cover their application fee and bring it with them to the event; or
 - Save their application and submit it at home when they have access to a method of payment. Students should be encouraged to do this the same day as their GAC event.
- Students applying to a college or university that does not require the entry of payment information to submit an online application should follow the college's instructions for sending in their payment. Some institutions require that the student submit the application, print the application confirmation screen and mail that to the Admissions Office along with their payment (typically a check or money order).

APPLYING WITH A FEE WAIVER

- Students eligible for a fee waiver should obtain the necessary fee waiver form from their high school counselor prior to the event. Students eligible for a fee waiver will need to do one of the following:
 - **For those colleges/universities that DO NOT require that the application fee be paid online in order for the application to be submitted online** – The student should complete and submit the application online using **GAfutures**. Once the application is submitted, the student should print the confirmation screen and mail a copy of the confirmation screen along with the appropriate fee waiver to the admission office. The student should be encouraged to keep a copy of both items for their records.
 - **For those colleges/universities that DO require that the application fee be submitted online in order for the application to be submitted online** – Since payment is required for the submission of the application, the application cannot be submitted online. Each page of the completed online application must be printed and be mailed to the Admissions Office with the fee waiver form. Processing of the application will not begin until these two items are received. The student should be encouraged to keep a copy of both items for their records.

HINTS AND TIPS FOR HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

These hints and tips have been developed based on feedback we have received from Georgia Apply to College Site Coordinators.

PRE-EVENT INFORMATION

- Form a GAC team at your school - the more people you involve, the better your event will be and the less work it will be for any one person!
- Work with teachers to develop a schedule which will provide ALL seniors the opportunity to participate and will give each student 45-60 minutes in the lab at a minimum.
- Ensure students have created a **GAfutures** account and completed appropriate prep work prior to your event. See the *Guide for Preparing Your Students* for additional information on how you can help your students complete college research.
- Ensure that all seniors have created and/or updated their *MyGAfutures* profile on **GAfutures** prior to the event. Since much of the information entered into their Student Profile will automatically populate into any application they begin, this will help them save time on the day of the event.
- Use the supplemental activities from the Site Coordinator Handbook to create excitement in the days and weeks leading up to your school's event.
- Students wishing to apply to any college or university with an essay or personal statement requirement should compose their essay(s) prior to the event. Any essays or personal statements should be saved on a disk or memory stick so that the text can be uploaded or copied and pasted into the application on the day of the event. In addition to bringing the disk with them on the day of the event, it is also recommended that they bring a paper copy of the essay or personal statement with them as a backup.
- Communicate with your volunteers early and often. Let them know where and when you would like them to meet for your event. Be sure to include information on where they should park at your school. Strongly encourage your volunteers to view the recorded online volunteer training and to review the Volunteer Handbook.
- Set the default home page on the computers to www.gafutures.org.
- Be sure all printers have enough toner and paper. Consider having a little extra of each on hand, just in case!

THE DAY OF THE EVENT

- Students should write personal statements in word processing software, and copy and paste into the application. This will allow them to spell check and will save them losing their responses if something happens to the internet connection while they are working on the application.
- Welcome volunteers and thank them for their assistance. Remember they are giving their time to help your school's students!
- Be sure each volunteer understands how and where you need them to assist during your event.

- Provide each volunteer with a schedule for the day. Let them know when they can expect students to be in the lab and when they can take breaks and take lunch. Consider providing a map to local restaurants as they may not be familiar with your area. Also, be sure to let them know where they can find the restroom and where they may leave their personal items during the event.
- Remember volunteers are there to assist students but not to ensure students stay on-task. A school staff member should be present at all times during your event.
- Assign someone to monitor printers and keep those applications that need to be printed in order.
- Consider requiring that all students arrive with the completed Student Prep Sheet in hand. This will help ensure they have the information they need to complete their application.
- Consider giving students a copy of their transcript when they arrive to participate. Many college applications ask students to enter a list of coursework taken, or courses in progress. Having the transcript available helps students complete these portions of the applications more quickly.
- Post in a visible place school-specific information students will need to complete their application:
 - Your high school's CEEB code
 - The high school attendance dates for your current seniors
- Make an announcement as each new group of students arrives in the lab.
 - Share with them that the objective for the day is to complete at least one college/university application for admission. Remind them that this is the first big step towards continuing their education following high school graduation.
 - Introduce the volunteers and inform the students that the volunteers are there to help them complete their applications. Let them know they should raise their hand if they need any assistance.
 - Instruct students to logon to their **GAfutures** account. Let them know what they should do if they have forgotten their password.
 - Inform students of payment options:
 - Students with a method of payment may complete their application submission during the event.
 - Students without a method of payment may complete their application submission from home if necessary.
 - Students qualifying for a fee waiver (i.e. College Board or ACT fee waiver) should follow the application instructions of the college and check with their counselor for necessary paperwork.
 - Let students know that they will be informed of any missing or incorrectly entered information as they attempt to move from one page of the application to the next. A message detailing the missing information will be provided at the top of the application screen.
 - Inform students of follow-up steps to complete their admissions file once application is submitted.
 - Instruct students to complete the online GAC evaluation form before leaving the event.
 - Remind students that they should pick up their "I Applied" button before leaving the event so they can let everyone know that they are planning to go to college.

- If a student is unable to complete an application on the day of the event for any reason, the application can be saved and returned to at a later time by clicking the **Save** button on the left side of the application screen.

POST EVENT INFORMATION

- Follow-up with those students who were unable to successfully submit their application during the event to be sure they were able to complete their submission.
- Follow-up with the students who participated in the event to be sure that they take the necessary steps to complete their admissions file with the college. This could include mailing in their high school transcript, test scores, references, and/or essays.

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating information about your school's Georgia Apply to College event can help ensure your event receives support from your student's parents/guardians, local colleges, and even your entire community! In order to help you easily share information about your event with the appropriate audiences, we have created several sample communications. We encourage you modify any of the samples to be appropriate for the needs of your school's population, and reflect the details of your event. Please utilize these sample communications as you see fit.

In the following pages, you will find:

- **SAMPLE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATION**
The *Sample Volunteer Recruitment Communication* is designed to be sent to your local colleges, businesses, community groups or others that you think may be interested in supporting your school's event.
- **SAMPLE VOLUNTEER CONFIRMATION COMMUNICATION**
The *Sample Volunteer Confirmation Communication* is designed to be sent to individuals who have indicated they are interested in volunteering during your event. It is recommended that directions to your school and/or a map to your school be provided with this communication.
- **SAMPLE VOLUNTEER FINAL REMINDER COMMUNICATION**
The *Sample Volunteer Final Reminder Communication* is designed to be sent to your volunteers a day or two prior to your event.
- **SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION**
The *Sample Parent/Guardian Communication* is designed to be sent to the parents/guardians of your seniors to let them know that their student will have the opportunity to apply to college during your school's Georgia Apply to College event. The letter also lets them know that their student may need their assistance as they prepare for the event. Students may need assistance as they research which colleges may be the best match for them and in order to obtain the information typically requested on an application for admission, such as information related to residency, social security number, etc.
- **SAMPLE PRE-EVENT MEDIA RELEASE**
The *Sample Pre-Event Media Release* is designed to be shared with your local media outlets prior to your event to help get the word out.
- **SAMPLE POST-EVENT MEDIA RELEASE**
The *Sample Post-Event Media Release* is designed to be shared with your local media immediately following your event to share the news of your event's success! We recommend customizing the *Post-Event Media Release* to reflect the details of your event and submitting it to your local media outlet with a photo from your event.

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATION

Dear <INSERT POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER NAME HERE>,

<INSERT THE NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL HERE> is excited to announce that we have been chosen to participate in this year's upcoming Georgia Apply to College (GAC) events. GAC is an event during which Georgia high school seniors are provided the opportunity to apply to college using **GAfutures.org**, Georgia's new online resource to help students plan, apply and find affordable ways to pay for college, while receiving assistance from specially trained college and community volunteers.

<INSERT THE NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL HERE> will be hosting this event on <INSERT THE DAY OF YOUR EVENT HERE> from <INSERT YOUR EVENT TIMES HERE>. In order to make this event a success, *we need your help!* Volunteers are needed to help our students navigate the college application process with the goal of completing at least one application for admission during the event. This exciting and valuable event will provide you with the opportunity to impact the lives of our students in a meaningful way by:

- Helping students logon to **GAfutures**
- Guiding graduating seniors through the college application process
- Answering any questions students have as they work on their application(s)
- Sharing college experiences
- Inspiring seniors to bigger and better things

Volunteers are provided access to both a Volunteer Handbook and an online training video to help ensure they are prepared to provide assistance to students and have a fun and positive experience.

Please strongly consider this chance to assist our school in this important initiative. This event is not a college recruitment event but is an excellent opportunity for you to assist Georgia high school students as they embark on the journey towards attending college. If you are interested in volunteering to help during our event please contact me directly using my contact information provided below.

Thank you and I hope to see you on <INSERT DATE OF YOUR EVENT HERE>!

Sincerely,

<INSERT SITE COORDINATOR NAME HERE>
 <INSERT YOUR TITLE HERE>
 <INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER HERE>
 <INSERT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS HERE>

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER CONFIRMATION COMMUNICATION

Thank you for agreeing to support <INSERT HIGH SCHOOL NAME HERE> during our Georgia Apply to College event. I know I speak for my entire school, but particularly our senior class, when I say “thank you!” We really appreciate you taking the time out of your day to provide assistance during our school’s GAC event!

We are very excited to have been selected as a Georgia Apply to College high school and look forward to our seniors having the opportunity to take the first step towards continuing their education following high school by completing a college application while receiving assistance from volunteers like you.

Volunteers play a key role during GAC by:

- Helping students logon to **GAfutures.org**
- Guiding graduating seniors through the college application process
- Sharing their college experiences
- Inspiring seniors to realize their dreams for the future

My name is <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR NAME HERE> and I am the designated site coordinator for our high school’s GAC event. I look forward to working with you during our school’s event which will be held on <INSERT EVENT DATE HERE> from <INSERT BEGIN TIME HERE> to <INSERT END TIME HERE>. We have you scheduled from <INSERT VOLUNTEER BEGIN TIME HERE> to <INSERT VOLUNTEER END TIME HERE>.

Upon arrival at our school, you may park <INSERT DETAILS ABOUT WHERE VOLUNTEERS SHOULD PARK>. We ask that all volunteers check-in at our main office upon arriving at our school. The main office will then provide you with information on where to join us for our GAC event. If you will be with us during lunch time, <INSERT DETAILS ABOUT WHAT VOLUNTEERS SHOULD DO FOR LUNCH>.

All volunteers are asked to review the Volunteer Handbook prior to participating in our event. You may wish to bring a copy with you to the event. Also, we encourage you to view the online volunteer training video which can be found on the *Get Involved as a Volunteer* section of **GAfutures.org**. The training will provide you with the information you need to provide assistance to our students during our event and to ensure you have a positive GAC experience.

If you have any questions or concerns prior to our event, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by email at <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR EMAIL HERE> or by phone at <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR PHONE HERE>. Thanks again for your support and we look forward to seeing you on <INSERT SCHOOL EVENT DATE HERE>!

Sincerely,

<INSERT SITE COORDINATOR NAME HERE>
 <INSERT YOUR TITLE HERE>
 <INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER HERE>
 <INSERT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS HERE>

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER FINAL REMINDER COMMUNICATION

Thank you once again for your interest in supporting <INSERT HIGH SCHOOL NAME HERE>'s Georgia Apply to College event. We really appreciate you taking the time out of your day to provide assistance to our school's GAC event! As a reminder, our event will be held on <INSERT EVENT DATE HERE>.

We hope that you have now had the opportunity to review the Volunteer Handbook. These materials have been designed to ensure you will have a positive GAC experience. GAC materials are available in the "Get Involved as a Volunteer" section of **GAfutures.org**.

As a reminder, you may park <INSERT DETAILS ABOUT WHERE VOLUNTEERS SHOULD PARK>. We ask that all volunteers check-in at our main office upon arriving at our school. The main office will then provide you with information on where to join us for our GAC event. Don't forget, if you will be with us during lunch time, <INSERT DETAILS ABOUT WHAT VOLUNTEERS SHOULD DO FOR LUNCH>.

If you have any questions or concerns prior to our event, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by email at <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR EMAIL HERE> or by phone at <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR PHONE HERE>. Thanks again for your support and we look forward to seeing you on <INSERT SCHOOL EVENT DATE HERE>!

Sincerely,

<INSERT SITE COORDINATOR NAME HERE>
<INSERT YOUR TITLE HERE>
<INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER HERE>
<INSERT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS HERE>

SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

<INSERT THE NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL> is excited to announce that our school has been selected to hold a Georgia Apply to College (GAC) event. Our event will be held on <INSERT YOUR SCHOOL EVENT DATE AND TIMES HERE>.

During our Georgia Apply to College event, all of our seniors will be given the opportunity to apply to college using **GAfutures.org**, Georgia's new online resource to help students plan, apply and find affordable ways to pay for college. Volunteers, many of whom will be staff from local colleges, businesses and community organizations, will be on hand to assist students as they work on their application(s) for college admission.

In preparation for the event, your student will be asked to complete college research to ensure they have a college in mind that will be a good match for them. In addition, students will be asked to gather the information that they will need to complete an application for college admission and may need your assistance. This information may include the following:

- Social Security Number
- Place of birth
- Residency information, such as tax, employment, driver's license information
- Citizenship information
- Immediate family military information
- Previous high school information

Students may either submit their application(s) during the event or save it to submit at a later time. On the day of our event, we will encourage students who do not have access to a payment method at school to save their application to submit at home, if possible. As another option, in the past, some students have elected to purchase a prepaid gift card, such as a Visa gift card, in an amount sufficient to cover their application fee and to bring that to school. Students who may qualify for an application fee waiver, such as the College Board or ACT fee waiver, should discuss this option with their counselor prior to the event to obtain the necessary paperwork.

If you should have any questions regarding this exciting program, please do not hesitate to call <INSERT COUNSELOR NAME HERE> at <INSERT COUNSELOR PHONE NUMBER HERE>. Thank you in advance for your support of this initiative to make college a part of your student's future!

Sincerely,

<INSERT SCHOOL COUNSELOR NAME HERE>

SAMPLE PRE-EVENT MEDIA RELEASE

<INSERT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL NAME> to hold Georgia Apply to College event.

<INSERT CITY, DATE HERE> -- <INSERT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL NAME> is excited to announce that it has been selected to participate in the Georgia Apply to College program, an annual event sponsored by Georgia Student Finance Commission and supported by Communities in Schools, the Georgia Department of Education, the Georgia Independent College Association, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia.

<INSERT NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL>'s event will be held on <INSERT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL EVENT DATE>. During the Georgia Apply to College event, seniors will receive hands-on assistance from volunteers, many of whom are from local colleges and universities, businesses and community organizations, as they navigate the college application process. The goal is for each student to successfully complete at least one college admission application.

Additional information about the Georgia Apply to College program can be found online at **GAfutures.org**. For more information about <INSERT NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL>'s event, please contact <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR NAME> at <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR TELEPHONE NUMBER/EMAIL ADDRESS>.

SAMPLE POST-EVENT MEDIA RELEASE

<INSERT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL NAME>'s seniors apply to college during Georgia Apply to College event.

<INSERT CITY, DATE HERE> -- <INSERT NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL>'s seniors received hands-on assistance applying to college during the school's Georgia Apply to College event held on

<INSERT EVENT DATE>. Roughly <INSERT NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS>

<INSERT NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL> students participated in the event, held in the school's

<INSERT EVENT LOCATION>.

<INSERT OTHER DETAILS SPECIFIC TO YOUR EVENT>

<INSERT QUOTES FROM STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND SITE COORDINATOR>

Additional information about the Georgia Apply to College program can be found online at

GAfutures.org. For more information about <INSERT NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL>'s event,

please contact <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR NAME> at <INSERT SITE COORDINATOR

TELEPHONE NUMBER/EMAIL ADDRESS>.

SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Georgia Apply to College events should be a fun way to get your students excited about applying to and attending college. The Supplemental Activities provided in this section can help generate excitement in your school and help foster a college-going culture. We hope that you will consider utilizing one or more of the Suggested Supplemental Activities provided below, modifying them to meet your needs, or creating your own!

- **Host an Alumni Panel** - Invite recent graduates of your high school who are currently enrolled in college to share their experiences with selecting a college, completing their college application(s) and enrolling as a college freshman. Consider inviting multiple students to participate in a panel discussion.
- **Host a Parent Panel** - Invite parents who have obtained a college degree to serve on a panel to discuss their college selection process, college experiences, and their current career or educational pursuits. Give students opportunities to ask questions and participate in discussions with the panelists.
- **Host a College Visit** - Invite local colleges to visit your school, and provide general information including the majors offered, their admission requirements, application process, cost of attendance, and financial aid options. Also, encourage students to visit college campuses when possible prior to applying.
- **Hold a Parent College Information Night** - Invite parents to attend a College Night for Parents. Discuss financial aid options (HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarships, HOPE Grant, Pell Grant, subsidized/unsubsidized student loans, Parent PLUS loans), the college application process, and additional resources that are available to parents of college bound seniors. Offer suggestions for how parents can best support their student throughout the college application process.
- **Incorporate College Essay Writing into Assignments** - Encourage English teachers to incorporate college essay writing as part of the regular curriculum. This will allow students to complete a sample college essay and receive feedback from teachers prior to submitting college applications.
- **Encourage College Major and Career Exploration** - Have students identify and research college majors they are interested in pursuing. Students can utilize the free resources found in the College Planning and Career Exploration sections of [GAfutures](#). Students can use this information to identify colleges that offer the major they are interested in, related career choices, earning potential, etc. Students could present this information to the class, or discuss in a small group.
- **Encourage Students to Visit Colleges and to Attend Information Sessions** – There is nothing like stepping foot on an actual college campus and attending an information session to get a sense of whether it might be a good fit. Encourage students to visit a college they have identified through their research as a school of interest.
- **Teachers as Advisors Activities** - Consider utilizing the Career and College lesson plans and activities available from the Georgia Department of Education through [GeorgiaStandards.org](#).

- **Additional Supplemental Activities** - The following additional supplemental activities can be found on the following pages of this Handbook:
 - **College Scavenger Hunt** – Pre-event activity
 - **Friday Nights College Lights** – Pre-event activity
 - **College Wall-ffiti** – Pre-event or event activity
 - **College Spirit Day** – Pre-event or event activity

Let us know if you have other supplemental activities that you use to build excitement surrounding your Georgia Apply to College event! We would love to include them in the Handbook!

COLLEGE WALL-FFITI

This activity is easy to plan and implement, and is extremely inexpensive!

Materials Needed:

- Large piece(s) of bulletin board paper
- Colorful markers

Create a College Wall-ffiti (like graffiti) by hanging large pieces of bulletin board paper on a wall in your school. Provide markers in multiple colors, and encourage students to write their dreams and goals related to attending college.

This activity could be done prior to GAC as a way to increase excitement about the event. It could also be incorporated during your event, by having all participating students sign the Wall-ffiti, and include their name, colleges they applied to, and a personal goal, statement, or message.

This simple activity is a great way to help students get excited about applying to college, and visually communicates the school's commitment to providing access to college for all students.

COLLEGE SPIRIT DAY

This activity allows your school’s faculty/staff members to show off their college school spirit, and opens dialogue between students and teachers about college.

Materials Needed:

- *Ask Me About my College* buttons



- “Ask me about my college: _____” signs to place on classroom doors (see next page)
- School faculty/staff willing to discuss their college experiences with students!

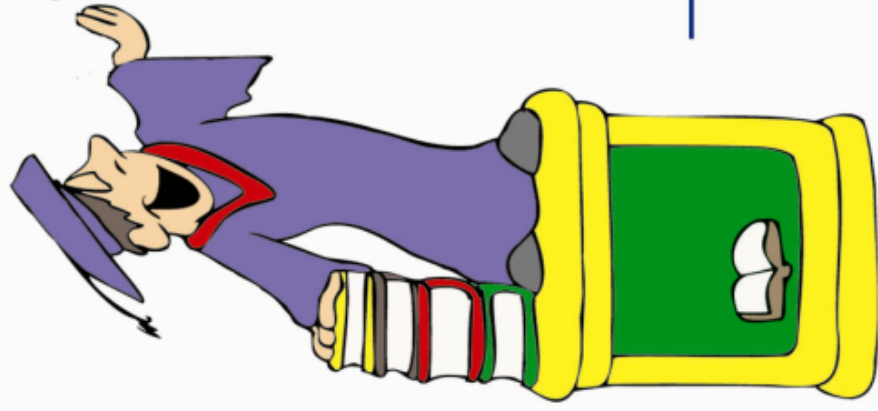
All school faculty/staff should be encouraged to wear colors representative of the college they attended. Make it fun! Faculty/staff could wear jerseys, t-shirts, hats, or anything else with their college’s logo. Encourage all faculty and staff to bring in a college yearbook, or other items related to their college on Spirit Day.

Make enough copies of the classroom signs to distribute to all staff in your building. Have them write the name of their college on the sign, and post on the classroom door, or another area easy to spot.

Have school faculty/staff wear the “Ask me about my college!” stickers/buttons throughout the day.

Ask teachers to take a few moments at the beginning or end of each class to discuss the benefits and value of college, and share some personal experiences. Encourage students to ask questions and join in the discussion.

Ask Me About My College!



COLLEGE SCAVENGER HUNT

The College Scavenger Hunt is a fun way to encourage students to interact with teachers, counselors and other school staff, and begin a dialogue about college experiences.

Materials Needed:

- Scavenger Hunt Sheets for participating students (will need to be personalized for your school)

The objective of this activity is for students to find and obtain the signatures of adults in the building who match the facts listed on the bingo sheet. The first student to successfully obtain signatures for every box is the winner!

This game requires a little bit of setup. Prepare a 5 by 5 bingo style sheet (see next page for an example), with interesting facts written inside the boxes that will pertain to your school's staff. These facts can be as general or specific as you like. For example:

- Attended college outside of Georgia
- Changed majors 3 or more times
- Double majored in Biology and Chemistry
- Received a full scholarship
- Is still paying back student loans
- Played a college sport

Be creative! You can mark the center square "FREE SPACE" like traditional bingo games if you would like. Students can play individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Students can only use a staff member's signature once!

For a shorter game, students will try to get 5 signatures in a row (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally) instead of completing the entire sheet.

Consider offering some type of prize to the first student to turn in a completed sheet.

Consider encouraging all students in your school to participate to get everyone thinking about college.

SAMPLE SCAVENGER HUNT SHEET

Was a member of a fraternity or sorority	Graduated summa cum laude from his/her college	Majored in Mathematics	Ate Ramen Noodles several times a week while in college	Changed majors from journalism to history
Was on his/her college tennis team	Is still best friends with his/her college roommate	Served as the school mascot during a football game	Attended the same college as his/her parents	Attended a 2-year college before transferring to a 4-year college
Met his wife while enrolled in college	Majored in Political Science	Served as a Resident Advisor (RA) while living in campus housing	Was elected homecoming king/queen	Attended college in Colorado
Completed bachelors and masters degree in 5 years	Was elected student government president	Attended college while still enrolled in high school	Graduated with a 3.5 GPA	Worked full-time while attending college
Wrote for his/her school newspaper	Participated in Study Abroad and lived in Italy for a year while in college	Worked in the college admission office as a student assistant	Lived at home while attending college	Had a double major in Biology and Chemistry

FRIDAY NIGHTS COLLEGE LIGHTS

This activity is a fun way to bring your community together to encourage and motivate your students, in a relaxed setting, to go to college. This is a great event to coordinate in partnership with your local Chamber of Commerce.

Materials Needed:

- Get creative! Create and customize your own Apply to College Month banners, signs or flyers. Or make it a contest among your students to see who can come up with the best one.

Preparation:

- Select a home Friday night football game during which you would like to hold the event.
- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to encourage them to partner with your school to hold a Friday Nights College Lights event. A list of the Georgia Chambers of Commerce can be found online at <https://www.gacce.org/index.php?id=107&action=catuid&catuid=41>. Provide your Chamber contact with a copy of the *Friday Nights College Lights “How To” Guide* and encourage them to help you identify potential community sponsors for your event. A copy of the “How To” Guide can be found in this Handbook for your reference but may also be found in the “Get Involved as a Volunteer” section of the Georgia Apply to College area of **GAfutures.org**.
- Create an area where community volunteers can meet to get a supply of flyers to hand out to students or pick up a sign to carry around the stadium.
- Hang up your Georgia Apply to College banner in a location where it will be visible to students either as they enter or watch the game.
- Game night
 - Welcome volunteers!
 - Offer a big THANK YOU for their involvement!
 - Encourage volunteers to utilize any of the Sample Sound Bites found in the *Friday Nights College Lights “How To” Guide* to start conversations with students.
- Consider offering free admission to the game for those volunteering, if possible.

FRIDAY NIGHTS COLLEGE LIGHTS “HOW TO” GUIDE

WHY -- Higher Education/College Is a “Must:”

We need young people to consider higher education, whether that means a four-year university, a community college, a technical college, or other additional training beyond receiving the high school diploma. A more educated workforce is necessary before our economic potential can be fully realized. We must motivate and inspire young people to consider and pursue higher education, especially students who may never have considered college. And we can do this by creating a college-going culture across the state and in communities. As a community leader, one easy strategy you can undertake is to sponsor “**Friday Night College Lights**” event at a local high school.

WHAT -- The Concept:

There is one place that brings entire communities together (students, parents, teachers, alumni, the business community, etc.): Friday night sports events in Georgia! These events are a place where everyone can join in a fun, enthusiastic environment! With minimal effort and a small investment of time, this is where we can let young people know how important they are to us. These young people are the next generation who will strengthen and protect our nation, provide our health care, build our homes, teach our youth, repair our cars, program our computers, and invent new technologies to improve our lives.

Your help is needed in sponsoring and/or finding a sponsor(s) willing to “adopt a game” during the athletic season. It can be any school sports event likely to draw a crowd – football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, etc. This simply means working with the school administration and coaches, attending the game and greeting these young people with a handshake. At the same time, remind those students to consider higher education and inspire them to take action to improve their lives and our future.

WHO -- Potential Sponsors:

It makes sense that the business community and other community leaders take the lead in sponsoring **Friday Night College Lights**. They are the benefactor of the skilled workforce that can be achieved by driving more young people toward a high school diploma and beyond– higher education. So, below is a sampling of possible sponsors, who can coordinate the event as a single organization or in partnership...

- Local Chamber of Commerce, especially the Education Committee
- Kiwanis Club
- Lions Club
- Rotary Club
- Booster Club
- Partners in Education
- Local PTA/PTSA
- Local colleges (4-year, 2-year, and technical)

WHEN – Best Timing:

October is College Access Month in Georgia and the Month of November has been proclaimed Georgia Apply to College Month by the Governor. To build upon the momentum generated by multi-organizations spreading the message, select a home game in one of these two months to highlight as **Friday Night College Lights**. Please be assured, though, that this event can work at any time during the year.

HOW – Ten Easy Steps:

- Visit **GAfutures.org** to find a listing of the high schools that are participating in the 2019 Georgia Apply to College events. These schools are naturals for involving in a **Friday Night College Lights** event, but any school would benefit from **Friday Night College Lights**.
- Contact the high school for permission to sponsor the event. Ask if volunteers can be given free admission to the game (a nice add-on!).
- Work with the high school to identify the home game date for conducting **Friday Nights College Lights**.
- Identify which group(s)/organization(s) will sponsor the event.
- Recruit volunteers to participate. The size of the high school will determine how many volunteers you think would be appropriate. Aim for at least 10 – 20. Get names and contact information for communicating information such as meeting time, talking points, etc.
- Hold a quick meeting, conference call, or communicate electronically with the volunteers to establish a time and place for meeting at the ball game, provide talking points/sound bites, and let them know if they will be passing out flyers or holding signs.
- Game Night – Meet volunteers to provide supply of flyers or signs and give everyone a big THANK YOU for helping get out the message about the importance of higher education. With flyers in hand and ready to give to each high school student, volunteers greet every student coming through the gate with a handshake, smile, and encouragement to give college a try.

Possible Sound Bites:

- *“Thanks for being an important part of this community. It’s never too early to think about a game plan for college.”*
 - *“College was important to me and helped provide me a successful life. It can do the same for you.”*
 - *“Studying hard, dreaming big will pay off when you apply to college.”*
 - *“You want a new car, good paying job? You can get it – go to college.”*
 - *“I might need you to be my doctor one day. I hope you are planning on college.”*
 - **Use your own message...**
- Have fun and enjoy the game!

Final Notes:

This “How To” Guide is not a prescription for getting students to apply to college. Use your own creativity. Consider placing a focus on other Apply to College events: Conduct a “College Lights” event at other sports games throughout the year, volunteer to help students create their **GAfutures** account and fill out college apps at during their school’s Georgia Apply to College program, volunteer to speak to a high school class about your career choice and what it took to reach your goals, and most importantly, do all you can to support any young person you know to assist them in applying to college.