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VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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

We are excited that you will be supporting Georgia's high school seniors during the annual Georgia Apply to College events! Georgia Apply to College could not happen without the assistance of volunteers like you and we sincerely appreciate your support! The Georgia Apply to College program has the goal of providing all Georgia high school seniors with the opportunity to apply to college with a focus on providing assistance to first generation and economically disadvantaged students as they navigate the college application process.

Georgia Apply to College events provide students with a dedicated time to work on college applications while receiving help from college and community volunteers like you. This assistance is particularly important for those students who do not have an adult at home who can provide assistance during the college application process. Many students who have participated in previous GAC events have indicated that without the event, they may not have applied to college. Your assistance helps students take the first step to success and can have a major impact on the lives of high school seniors!

This handbook has been created to provide you with an overview of Georgia Apply to College and the important assistance provided by GAC volunteers. The handbook provides detailed information that will help you prepare for your role as a volunteer, ensuring that you have a fun and rewarding volunteer experience. We hope that you will take some time prior to the event to familiarize yourself with the information contained in this handbook so you will be ready to assist students during the high school events. You may also wish to print or download a copy and bring it with you or refer to during the event(s).

To help you prepare, the Volunteer Handbook includes the following:

- Information on the volunteer role
- Volunteer Guidelines
- Step-by-step instructions on how students can access and complete an online application using **GAfutures**
- Information on how students submit their application fee

Thank you again for your support of Georgia Apply to College! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us by email at gac@gsfc.org or by phone at 770.724.9065.

OVERVIEW OF GEORGIA APPLY TO COLLEGE

Georgia Apply to College (GAC) events are held each November in Georgia. The goal of GAC is to provide Georgia high school seniors...

- the opportunity to apply to college using
- by providing assistance as they complete their application(s) for admission
- with a *focus* on providing assistance to first generation and underrepresented students as they navigate the college application process.
- GAC also seeks to encourage students to apply to college earlier in their senior year.

Since its inception, Georgia Apply to College has received wide support. Each year, the Governor has issued a proclamation for Georgia Apply to College, and GAC has received the endorsement of the Georgia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (GACRAO). In addition, the Georgia Student Finance Commission sponsors the GAC initiative and is supported by the following agencies and organizations:

- Communities in Schools
- Georgia Department of Education
- Georgia Independent College Association
- Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education
- Technical College System of Georgia
- University System of Georgia

THE VOLUNTEER ROLE

Volunteers are essential to the success of Georgia Apply to College (GAC) and assist in many ways. The following are examples of how volunteers help during GAC events:

- Greet students as they arrive or log on to the event.
- Help students logon to the **GAfutures** website and begin an application.
- Guide students through the college application process and help answer any questions students may have, regardless of where the student wishes to apply.
- Monitor printers (if in-person) to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed or encourage saving periodically.
- Share personal college experiences with students.
- Instruct each student to complete an online evaluation of their GAC experience.
- Give an "I Applied!" sticker or virtual background to each student after they complete an application.
- Congratulate each student on applying to college and encourage them to complete their admission file by sending in their high school transcript, test scores, or any other documentation that the college may require.

Prior to participating in a Georgia Apply to College event, volunteers are asked to thoroughly review this Handbook in order to be prepared to assist students.

Each participating high school recruits and coordinates the volunteers for their event. Individuals interested in volunteering at a particular high school should contact the school directly for more information on how to get involved. Please visit **GAfutures.org** for a list of participating high schools.

On the day of the event, volunteers are asked to arrive at the high school or logon to virtual platform a few minutes early in order to have time to get settled before the first group of students arrives. Upon arrival at the high school or virtual platform, volunteers should check-in at the Main Office or with the virtual host, identifying themselves as a Georgia Apply to College volunteer. The Main Office will then direct each volunteer to the appropriate location if in-person. During the event, volunteers should provide assistance as requested by the GAC high school staff.

We hope that you have a fun and rewarding experience as a Georgia Apply to College event volunteer!

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

The success of the Georgia Apply to College events depends upon the assistance and support of volunteers from Georgia's colleges, universities, business communities, and community groups and organizations. Assisting as a volunteer involves direct interaction with high school students. Volunteers not only provide valuable assistance to participating students but serve as examples and role models for students. Because the Georgia Apply to College program strives to promote enriching, fun and meaningful interactions for both volunteers and the participating students, the following volunteer guidelines have been established:

- Volunteers must use appropriate language and model honorable behavior, such as respect, integrity, honesty, and excellence. The use of profanity or sexualized language or jokes is inappropriate. Violating state law regarding interactions with youth (*e.g.*, providing them alcohol or illegal drugs) is forbidden.
- Volunteers must consider how any physical contact or virtual chat may be perceived and must take particular care when interacting with students.
- Interactions with students must both **be** appropriate and **appear** appropriate. Volunteers will spend most of their time with groups of students, although occasionally one-to-one situations may occur. Prior to any one-to-one interaction, a volunteer should ensure another adult is present or aware of the situation. Virtual interaction should only take place during the online event and any future online interactions should be facilitated by the high school.
- Volunteers are responsible for the quality of interactions. Students often find it difficult to state discomfort or objections. Volunteers must be especially sensitive to physical and verbal cues that students may provide.

If at any time you are uncomfortable with a situation, please immediately notify the GAC Site Coordinator or other high school staff member.

THE HIGH SCHOOL SITE COORDINATOR

Each high school has identified a Site Coordinator (typically a member of the counseling staff) who is responsible for handling the logistics of their school's event. Each site coordinator is responsible for all aspects of their school's event, including communicating with their volunteers, and notifying them of specifics for their event, including where to park or virtual platform, when and where to meet on the day of the event, the event schedule, and how they wish each volunteer to assist during their event. If you have any questions or concerns regarding a specific high school event, we encourage you to contact the high school site coordinator for the event.

Site Coordinators are also responsible for ensuring that their seniors are prepared to participate in the event. This includes making sure that all seniors have created a <u>GAfutures</u> account and have completed college research. As a tool to help prepare students, the GAC Coordinator encourages participating seniors to utilize the College Search on <u>GAfutures</u>. By researching colleges before their GAC events, students will arrive prepared to apply to those college(s) that they have identified as a good match for them.

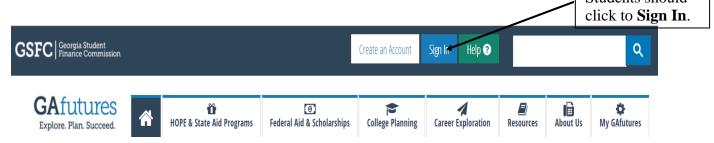
Prior to their school's GAC event, students are also encouraged to complete a "Student Prep" sheet which captures some of the information needed for a college admission application. Students should plan to bring the completed prep sheet to their school's GAC event. With these pre-event activities completed, students should be ready to successfully complete and submit their online applications during the GAC event while receiving assistance from volunteers like you!

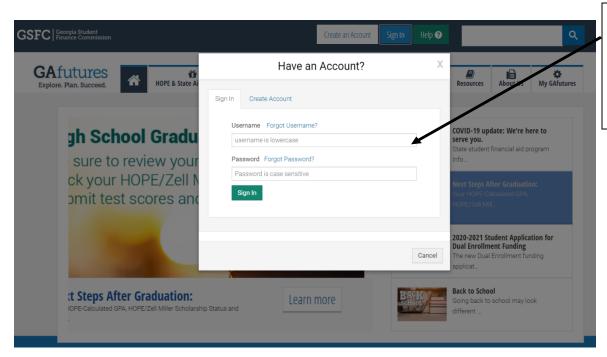
GENERAL STEPS FOR COMPLETING AN ONLINE APPLICATION USING GASutures

Below you will find the step-by-step instructions outlining how students will apply using the **GAfutures** website during Georgia Apply to College (GAC) events. While the following outlines the steps students follow to apply, you may also find it helpful to take a few minutes to become familiar with **GAfutures** before participating in an event. We recommend that you bring this Handbook with you to your event(s) as it can be a great reference guide as you assist students!

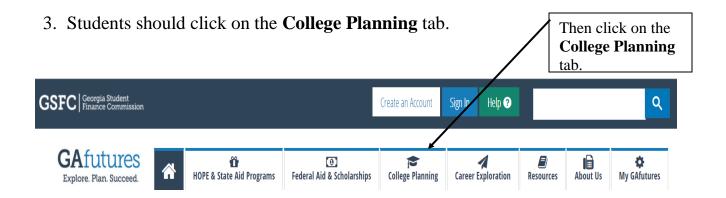
- 1. Students should go to www.gafutures.org.
- 2. Students should sign in to their already created **GAfutures** account. If any student is unable to successfully login to their **GAfutures** account because they forgot their username or password, they can use the *Forgot Username or Password* function on the sign in page. If a student states they have not yet created an account, then they may follow the online steps to create one.

 Students should

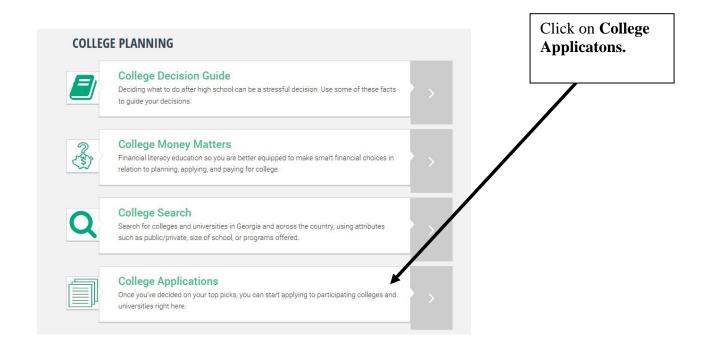




Students should enter their Username and Password.



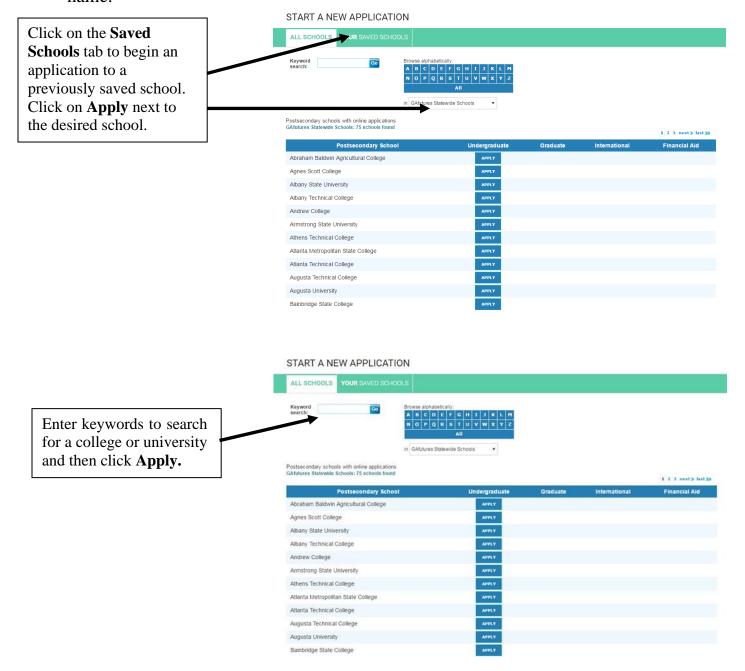
4. On the College Planning page, students should click on College Applications.



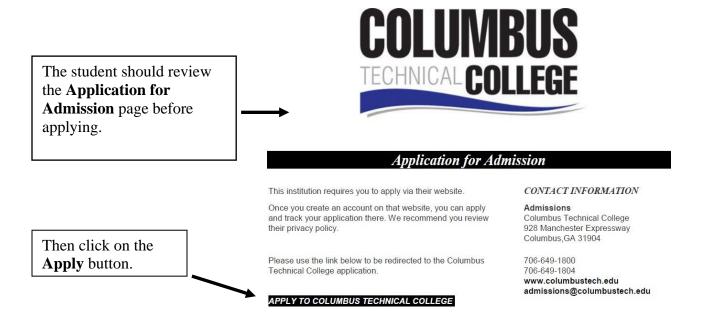
NOTE: CONTINUE TO STEPS 5-13, IF YOU WILL BE A UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

FOR THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA APPLICANTS ONLY

5. If the student is starting a new application and previously added the college to their list of saved schools, he/she should click on **My Saved Schools** in the **Start a New Application** box. The student can then click on **Apply** next to the college or university name. If the student did not previously save the school, he/she can search for the college in the **All Schools** box and then click **Apply** next to the college or university name.



6. Each application on **GAfutures** begins with an introductory page providing information about that institution's application process and other institution-specific requirements. The student should read the Application for Admission carefully before applying. Once they have reviewed the page, they should click **Apply To "Name of the Institution"...** to begin the application.



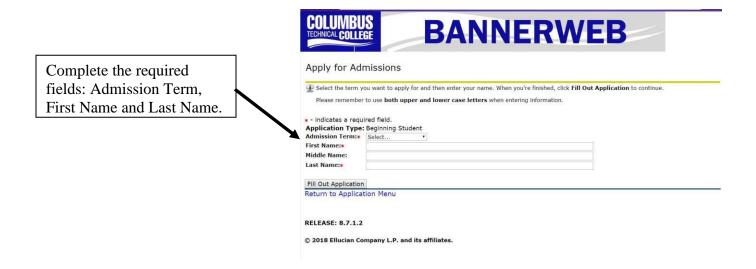
7. Once the application opens, the student will be taken to the institution's website. If the student is applying for the first time, the student will need to create a first-time user account.



8. Once an account is created, click **Login** and select **Beginning Student** as the **Application Type** and **Continue**.



9. Complete the required fields and click on **Fill Out Application** to continue.



10. The Application Checklist is a checklist of the application sections. A checkmark will appear by data that is entered in a section.



Application Checklist

This is a checklist of your application sections. When you enter data in a section, a checkmark will appear by that section. When you have provided all the application information, click **Application is Complete** to start the application process. Applications must be completed in **two** business days.



Questions? Ask Admissions

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Application Checklist

This is a checklist of your application sections. When you enter data in a section, a checkmark will appear by that section. When you have provided all the application information, click **Application is Complete** to start the application process. Applications must be completed in **two** business days.

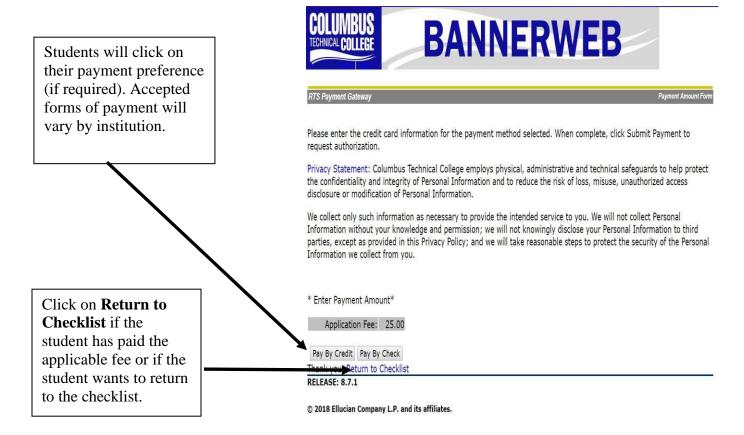


Questions? Ask Admissions

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11. The final checkmark allows for electronic payment of the institution's application fee. Students should be sure to follow the payment instructions for each college and/or university to which they apply. Payment forms accepted will vary by institution (credit/debit card, E-check, fee waiver, etc.).



Once the payment information (if required) has been entered, they should click **Return to Checklist**. Once data is entered into all sections, click **Application is Complete** to start the application.

Notes:

- If the student does not have a payment method with them at school, that is okay! Students should be encouraged to save the application so that they may resume and submit it later. Remind students not to forget to submit their completed applications later if they are unable to do so during the event.
- If the student is eligible for a fee waiver, but the college to which they are applying does not have a fee waiver option available for online submission (and requires payment of the application fee to submit the online application), they will instead need to print each page of the online application (make sure they get all of the pages!) and mail it to the Office of Admissions along with the fee waiver information. To do this, the student must navigate to each section of the application and selected print from the browser tool bar or by enter **Control** + **P** on the keyboard.

12. Congratulate the student on applying to college!

13. Provide the student with an "I Applied!" sticker or virtual background.





- 14.Instruct the student to complete the online GAC evaluation survey.
- 15. Encourage the student to complete their admissions file by submitting any required supporting documentation, such as their high school transcript and test scores.

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 the application online. 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 Admissions information section for their college in the College Planning section of GAfutures. Participating high schools are encouraged to ensure their students have completed this type of research before their event.

FOR THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA APPLICANTS ONLY

Prior to beginning their online application, students should carefully review the **Application Information** screen. This is the first screen that appears when a new application is started. The Application Information screen contains instructions related to the submission of the application fee for that specific college or university.

Colleges Requiring an Application Fee for Submission

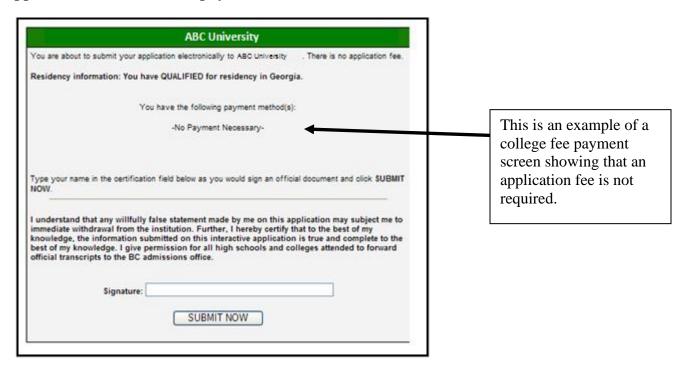
Many colleges and universities in Georgia require the entry of a valid online payment in order to submit an online application. Those colleges requiring an application fee will only have payment options (such as online check or credit card) available on their application fee payment screen. In this case, **the application cannot be submitted until the payment information has been entered online**. Students who do not have payment available with them at school may save their completed application and submit it at home. *It is not necessary for a student to bring a form of payment with them to their Georgia Apply to College event.*

Colleges Allowing Application Fees to be Mailed

Some of the colleges and universities in Georgia allow the online application to be submitted without the entry of payment information. These colleges and universities may require that payment be mailed along with the application confirmation screen. The application confirmation screen appears once the student successfully submits the application. Those students applying to a college or university with an application fee but not requiring the entry of a payment to submit the application, **must mail the payment to the college in order for their application to be reviewed.**

Colleges Not Requiring an Application Fee

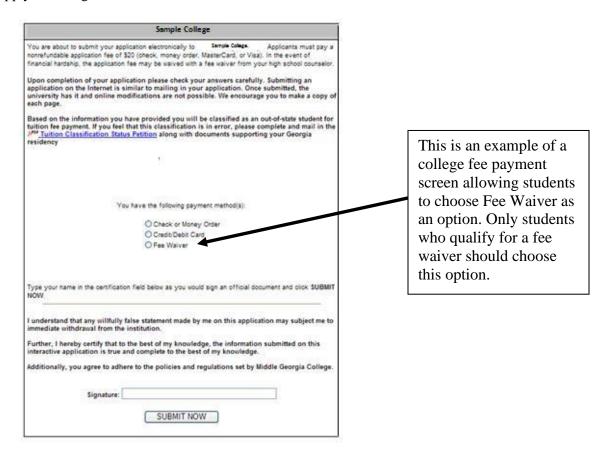
A few of the colleges and universities in Georgia never require an application fee for those applications submitted through **GAfutures**. Those colleges not requiring an online application fee will typically have a note indicating this on the application fee payment screen. When applying to a college that does not require an application fee, the student may submit the application online and no payment needs to be mailed to the institution.



College Board and Other Fee Waivers

Many of the colleges and universities in the state will waive the admission application fee if the student provides an acceptable application fee waiver. In most cases, this includes the College Board or ACT fee waivers, and in some cases, other fee waivers are accepted; however, the accepted fee waivers can vary from college to college. Students eligible for a fee waiver should obtain the necessary fee waiver form from their high school counselor.

Some institutions have an option to select "Fee Waiver" on the payment screen. Students who qualify for a fee waiver should select this option, and print and mail the application confirmation screen (this is the screen the student sees once they successfully submit their application), along with the completed fee waiver paperwork. Students should always follow the submission instructions provided by the institution.



If the student wishes to utilize a fee waiver and is applying to an institution that does not have "Fee Waiver" as an online payment option, the student will need to print the application and mail it to the college or university with the fee waiver form they obtain from their high school counselor. They will not be able to submit the application online and an admission decision will typically not be provided until the fee waiver form is received by the college.

If a student has questions about how to apply to a particular college or university while utilizing a fee waiver, they should be encouraged to contact the admissions office of the college or university where they are applying for further instructions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if a student did not create a GAfutures account before the GAC event?

All participating high schools are encouraged to ensure all students have created a <u>GAfutures</u> account. If you encounter a student who does not recall their <u>GAfutures</u> account information, they should either use the *Forget Password* or *Forget Username* option on the Sign In page or create a new account.



What if the student has not decided upon a major?

Colleges understand that not every applicant will have selected a desired major. As a result, many applications will provide an option such as "undecided" on their application. If "undecided" or a similar option is not available, the student may wish to select the major that is of the most interest, keeping in mind that most colleges allow students to change their major later.

What if the application doesn't allow the student to select their desired term?

All colleges in the state have been asked to ensure they have current application terms available on their online application. However, if a student begins an application and finds that the desired enrollment term is not available, they should select the term closest to the desired term and submit the online application. The student should then contact the admissions office as soon as possible (within one week is recommended) to inform the institution of the correct desired term of enrollment.

What should a student do if he/she does not have, or does not wish to provide their Social Security number on their application?

If a student does not have a Social Security number or does not wish to provide their Social Security number on their application, they will still be able to apply online. While a student's social security number is extremely helpful to the college/university in matching submitted transcripts, financial aid documents, and other documentation to their admission application, providing the social security number is not required.

What if the student is missing a required piece of information on the application?

Prior to the GAC event, participating schools were encouraged to ensure that each student completed a Student Prep Sheet and bring it with them to the event. If a student is still unable to complete any part of the application, they may finish another section but before exiting the Application Checklist they must click on **Finish Later**.

Note: Remember to check application deadlines when opting to Finish Later.

What if the student does not have the credit card information needed to submit the online payment during the event?

Many colleges and universities require that the student enter payment information in order to submit their online application. As a result, students without payment information will not be able to submit an application to those institutions during the event. Students without a method of payment should not be discouraged from completing an application! These students may save their application and resume it at a later time.

How does a student know how much an institution charges for the application fee? The amount of the application fee is typically provided on the application introduction screen for each institution. Application fee information is also typically available on the

admissions page on each institution's website.

Is there a limit to how many applications a student may submit?

There is not a maximum number of applications that a student may complete during the event; however, due to the volume of students needing to participate in the event at some of the high schools, the high school may elect to limit the number of applications that a student may submit. Check with the high school Site Coordinator for additional information. Please keep in mind that due to the time and work that is involved in processing an application for admission, students should be encouraged to apply only to those colleges which they have determined will be a good match for them.

How does a student print their application?

Printing an application through **GAfutures** requires printing each section of the application individually. When printing their application, students should confirm that they have printed each section of the application. See Step 15 in this Handbook for additional information.

As a volunteer, what should I do if I cannot answer a question a student has while working on his/her application?

All volunteers bring something unique to the Georgia Apply to College experience. If you cannot answer a question asked by a student, chances are that one of the other volunteers may be able to assist. All volunteers are encouraged to work together as a team to learn from each other and to ensure that all students receive the assistance that they need!



GAC VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Email	Company, College, or Agency Affiliation (if applicable)

