



12TH YEAR CAMPAIGN

2018-19

American College Application Campaign &
College Goal Washington

Site Coordinator Toolkit



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Welcome to the 12th Year Campaign

Thank you on behalf of the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), administrator of the 12th Year Campaign. By volunteering to host college admissions and financial aid filing events, you are helping increase the number of career- and college-ready high school graduates, reduce the financial barriers students face in earning a postsecondary credential, and increase the number of students earning a postsecondary credential.

The Washington Student Achievement Council is counting on you, as a site lead, to manage preparation for your site for your American College Application Campaign (ACAC) and/or College Goal Washington (CGW) event. You and your team are not only helping students learn about the admissions and financial aid process but also assisting them in completing the most crucial steps, applying for admissions and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA). This workbook offers guidelines on preparing for and executing informative and effective events.

In addition to this toolkit, ACAC and CGW materials and resources will be mailed to you prior to your event and will be available at www.readysetgrad.org/educators/grad/12th-year-campaign

Thank you for your time and efforts. Your support is critical to the students and families in the state of Washington and the success of this program!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact WSAC program staff.

Sincerely,

Christina Winstead
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Background

American College Application Campaign

The American Council on Education houses the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), a multi-state effort to increase college access through the dissemination of ideas, development of practices, and technical assistance for ACAC events. WSAC administers the state's program as part of the 12th Year Campaign: www.wsac.wa.gov/12th-year-campaign.

ACAC State Overview

While the goal of ACAC is to promote excitement and awareness about the college exploration and preparation process among all students, special attention should be given to first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, particularly those who enrolled in the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program. For more information on this program, visit www.collegebound.wa.gov.

College Goal Sunday

College Goal Sunday began in Indiana in 1989 to meet a specific need. Families listed costs as the main barrier to college attendance, even though millions of dollars of financial aid were available to Indiana students. Too many low

12th Year Campaign

In 2014, WSAC combined two previously distinct initiatives—ACAC and CGW—to launch the 12th Year Campaign to better meet the needs of students. WSAC supports the college application process through ACAC and the financial aid process through CGW.

In 2015, WSAC launched the FAFSA Completion Initiative to provide student-specific FAFSA completion data to high schools and school districts to support the national effort to increase FAFSA submission rates. Please contact Christina Winstead at christinaw@wsac.wa.gov for more information about how to access this easy-to-use tool or view information at bit.do/FAFSA, as well as, publically available data at bit.do/FAFSACompletionData.

Combined, these three efforts support and encourage students through the college application, financial aid application, and FAFSA completion processes. For more information about these efforts, visit www.wsac.wa.gov/12th-year-campaign.

income, historically underserved, first-generation students were not applying for available funds.

In 2006, the Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA) brought College Goal Sunday to Washington. In 2013, WSAC assumed program administration and rebranded College Goal Sunday as College Goal Washington.

CGW State Overview

In 2017-2018, Washington State hosted over 200 events at 150 sites during October and November, serving over 4,600 students and families. CGW is a component of the WSAC's commitment to the following goals:

- Increase the number of students, especially those from underrepresented populations, who complete their FAFSA or WASFA.
- Ensure CBS students file as soon after October 1 as possible.
- Educate and inform students and families about the entire financial aid process.
- Leverage resources and streamline efforts to help students through this process.
- Provide support for FAFSA and WASFA completion 12th Year Campaign.

Overview of Implementing 12th Year Program

ACAC Site Coordinator

Each high school will identify a site coordinator or site lead, typically a high school counselor or assistant principal, who will be responsible for implementing the program locally.

Site Responsibilities

- Participate in kickoff events during the first week of the campaign (October-November). On a school-designated day during the week, all school staff will wear college gear, educators will share their education or career pathways, and every student will participate in a 10-15 minute college/career exploration activity during the day.
 - Note: Schools that participate in Discover U prior to the ACAC, do not need to repeat this activity.
- Hold in-school activities during the month focused around college exploration, preparation, and application.
- Provide dedicated time, space, and help for students completing college applications.
- Conduct a student survey provided by WSAC.
- Report data to WSAC via the site lead survey.

CGW Site Coordinator

WSAC Responsibilities

- Guide and oversee of all CGW events.
- Advise and guide all aspects of planning and implementation.
- Provide overall project management to ensure coordination across the state.
- Produce marketing and event materials to promote events, including materials to identify volunteers.
- Provide customizable templates for outreach efforts.
- Maintain and update the CGW site on readyssetgrad.org.
- Work with each location to ensure a smooth, successful event.
- Provide FAFSA/WASFA training.

Site Lead Responsibilities

- Lead CGW locally.
- Manage event planning and logistics.
- Market and promote events locally.
- Recruit event day volunteers.
- Oversee the event.
- Complete a site lead evaluation.
- Connect site leads with other available resources such as FAFSA/WASFA Experts and workshop presenters.
- Evaluate all CGW program activities.
- Focus on event planning & preparation, support team & event-day volunteers, event day coordination, and wrap up & completion.

Support Team: Identify Stakeholders & Convene a Team

Successful ACAC and/or CGW events are collaborations between schools and multiple stakeholders. Engage stakeholders through the creation of a support team. This support team can assist in event preparation for and execution.

Choose and recruit team members who bring useful perspectives about the target populations and who understand the importance of postsecondary education. Check in with this team regularly. Any members planning to attend the actual event(s) should attend any required webinar trainings or view recorded webinars.

Potential community partners include:

- Admissions representatives from local colleges (two-year and four-year).
- College access initiatives (federally funded, state-funded, or community-based).
- College admissions counselors.
- Faith-based community.
- Financial aid personnel.
- High school counselors.
- Local business leaders.
- Local chamber of commerce.
- Local college students.
- Local government officials or elected representatives.
- Non-profit organizations such as the YMCA, 4H, Boys and Girls Club.
- PTA/O and other parents/family members who want to be engaged in the process.
- Public relations professionals.
- Retired school personnel.
- TRiO or GEAR UP staff.
- Staff of organizations that work with the target population.
- Student leaders.

12th Year Campaign Event Resource Audit

Both ACAC and CGW are collaborative initiatives. Use this audit to identify potential partners to assist with the event planning and implementation. Follow all district and school policies regarding non-school personnel visiting, volunteering, or otherwise assisting with the school's program. Note: The list is not exhaustive; include other stakeholders as appropriate.

Potential Partner	Name of Contact	Email Address	Phone Number
Admissions Representative From Local College			
Community-Based College Access Initiative			
Faith-Based Community Representative			
Financial Aid Staff from Local College			
Local Business Leader			
Local Chamber of Commerce			
Non-profit Representative			
PTA or Parent Representative			
School Staff			
Student Representative			
TRiO or GEAR UP Staff			
<i>Add additional lines as needed.</i>			

Support Team: Agenda Items for Convening

The support team is effective in creating support and buy-in for the program. Team discussion topics include:

- What is ACAC and/or CGW?
- Role of school team.
- Date(s) for the event.
- Communication strategy: student, parents, school staff, community.
- Pre-Application activities – ensuring students are prepared.
- Pre-Application activities– creating or enhancing a college-going culture.
- Mayoral Proclamation.

- Recruiting students for the initiative.
- Including underclassmen in the program.
- Engaging volunteers.
- Evaluation and data collection.
- Application follow-up – ensuring the college and financial aid processes are completed.
- Participating in CGW by hosting a FAFSA/WASFA completion event at school.
- Access to student-level FAFSA data through the WSAC FAFSA completion portal.
- Confirm district has a data agreement with WSAC to access data.
- How to best use the FAFSA Completion portal at school.

After the conclusion of the campaign, the support team should meet to debrief on the successes and challenges of the current year’s initiative. Assess what worked and what areas need improvement to get a jump-start on planning for next year’s program. Create an action plan to follow-up with students who need to complete the college and financial aid application processes.

Volunteers & Community Involvement

The success of a 12th Year Campaign program relies on the site coordinator, the school, and the community. Engaging the school community in planning and implementation creates excitement about the event. The community plays an important role in creating and sustaining a college-going culture.

Invite all seniors to participate; especially targeting students who have not completed a financial aid application and/or a college application participate during the campaign.

These initiatives rely on the support of active and dedicated volunteers. Reach out to community groups and members to help bolster the school’s college-going culture and to help reinforce the importance of college admissions and FAFSA and WASFA completion in the community. Recruit volunteers from within the school or community to support the site coordinator and to assist students during lab hours and other activities.

Volunteers help ensure that events will run smoothly. (For the purposes of this workbook, the term volunteers includes all support team members, regardless of whether they receive compensation from their regular employer or not.)

The site coordinator, or a designated volunteer lead, will need to recruit additional volunteers with event-day responsibilities. If WSAC receives a request from someone wanting to volunteer for your event, agency staff will forward their contact information to the site lead.

Volunteer and community involvement is crucial to the success of an event. Identify contacts in the community who are interested in helping make the event a success by either donating time and/or resources. Community members can serve as volunteers, provide prizes, or help promote the event. Their presence lends weight and excitement to the initiative and showcases the community’s dedication to promoting student success.

Recruiting Volunteers

Send all potential volunteers/groups a recruitment letter with an event explanation and details. See the Resource Guide for a *sample volunteer recruitment letter* and *thank you letter*.

Volunteer recruitment tips include:

- Identify contacts in the community that may be helpful. Start with a Support Team Resource Audit to identify contacts that can help make the event a success by donating time and/or resources.
- When promoting events, always mention the need for volunteers in the communication.
- Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Depending on the district's policy, site leads may need to conduct a background check on volunteers.
- CGW volunteers should register using the link: <http://readyssetgrad.org/educators/grad/college-goal>, or should contact site leads directly.
- Make sure to contact volunteers approximately one to two weeks prior to the event with the event agenda. Confirm the time and location and provide information about any pre-event meetings. CGW volunteers must participate in two volunteer training webinars – one about the FAFSA and one about the WASFA.

Recruit students to help implement the events and activities.

- Consider recruiting seniors to mentor freshmen, sophomores, and/or juniors on postsecondary preparation. Senior mentors can meet with assigned freshmen, sophomores, or juniors during activities or assist during the week.
- Identify student leaders from each grade who could bring their own ideas to the table.
- Select student helpers from each grade and educate them about the campaign.
- Ask students to promote the event through their social media accounts.
- Ask them to share implementation ideas, post, and distribute materials.

Enlist teachers.

- Share the calendar with staff and ask for help brainstorming ways to make the campaign something the whole school embraces.
- Ask teachers to incorporate college-planning and exploration activities into their classes leading up to the campaign. Examples include lessons on paying for college and calculating a return on investment in math class, or writing college or scholarship application essays in English class.
- Encourage teachers to decorate their classrooms and doors with college pennants, posters, and information. Ask teachers to wear their favorite college gear during the campaign.

Successful sites get the whole school community involved. Encourage all staff, including custodians, cooks, administrative assistants, and bus drivers to wear college swag, to post 12th Year Campaign information, and to encourage students to apply.

Promote the Initiative

It is crucial to promote and build excitement around these initiatives. While much of the focus for the campaign is on seniors, truly successful initiatives actively engage the entire school community.

Send letters and email reminders and/or use an automated phone call system to remind students and families of the opportunities available

during the campaign. Use school newsletters, social media and post messages through the school's student information system (like Skyward). Promote the event to all those involved — both in school and in the community. The Resource Guide includes *Sample Public Service Announcement/PA Announcement*, *Sample Press Release*, *Sample Student/Family Letter*, and *Sample Event Reminders for Students*.

Marketing and Outreach

WSAC will market and provide outreach for both ACAC and CGW on a statewide level. To build support for an event, connect with local community groups and media outlets. Use the templates in the Resource Guide for these purposes, including a press release template and email template.

PRO TIP: Market events locally.

In addition to promoting events at school, what other local places could advertise an event? Consider where students go. Suggestions include teen center, faith-based organizations, youth groups, local businesses, coffee shops, and library.

Approach local organizations and businesses about promoting the event in tandem with asking for donations. The Resource Guide has information about how to ask for donations. If a business says they cannot donate to the event at this time, ask to hang a poster or two promoting the events.

In addition to marketing the campaign at local businesses and other organizations, send a press release or connect with a local media outlet. Note: Reporters need a few weeks of lead-time before covering an event. Marketing strategies include:

- Provide reporters with statistics about how many students and families attended and how many volunteers were involved in past events. No longer have access to those statistics? Contact WSAC lead, Christina Winstead for these statistics.
- Encourage past attendees to be interviewed, which can provide a local hook for the story.
- Ground reporters in the statewide and national contexts. The *press release templates* in the Resource Guide mention the number of events held in Washington State, the number of attendees at these events, and that ACAC or CGW is part of a larger national program.
- Be prepared when contacting reporters. Find out who in the area covers K-12 education and postsecondary education and target them first.
- Please send copies of news stories to Christina Winstead at christinaw@wsac.wa.gov.

Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities

Use this list to organize volunteer recruitment, marketing, and fundraising efforts.

Volunteers & Presenters

- Lead and manage all outreach/marketing volunteers.
- Recruit event-day volunteers for greeters/guides, registration, IT/technical support, FAFSA & WASFA helpers.
- Arrange any specialty presenters, lectures, or presentations.
- Recruit FAFSA/WASFA experts to provide guidance and assistance.
- Recruit DREAMer Advisor (optional) to provide guidance with WASFA and HB 1079.
- Relay information to all volunteers regarding meetings, trainings, and other volunteer requirements.

Marketing & Outreach

- Develop an outreach/marketing plan to reach the target population.
- Post printed promotional materials.
- Lead local media outreach, as appropriate.
- Promote event using Skyward or similar program, school website, social media, etc.
- Promote event using provided promotional materials.

Fundraising & Sponsorship

- Solicit support from local schools, community groups, and businesses to secure a sponsor for food and beverages for the event, and donations of items for drawings or giveaways.
- If needed, document donations as in-kind for other grants (there is no in-kind requirement for CGW).

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SPECIFIC
GUIDANCE**

Site Coordinator Event Countdown

Spring – Start of School Year

- Register high school for participation in the 12th Year Campaign and in ACAC. During spring course enrollment meetings with juniors, educate students about the College Application program. Encourage juniors to research postsecondary paths and institutions.
- Print and review the current Site Coordinator Toolkit and Resource Guide.
- Establish a school team to assist with the activities and events; host first meeting.
- Add ACAC to the school's master calendar.
- Reserve computer facilities for the school's events.
- Ensure site leads have adequate amounts of fee waivers for those students who are unable to afford the application fees. Contact the College Board, ACT, or NACAC if additional waivers are needed.

8 Weeks Prior to Event

- Communicate the opportunity to students, families, and the community using the information letters available in the Resource Guide. This is a great way to recruit volunteers.
- Communicate with volunteers for the event using the letters or by making announcements at school meetings, PTA/PTO meetings, and/or parent nights. If the school has a criminal background check requirement for volunteers, follow those guidelines.

7 Weeks Prior to Event

- Arrange a schedule for the event, including which groups or classes of students will participate at what time.
- Encourage students to begin college research. Use WSAC's readyssetgrad.org, ACT's ACT Profile act.org/profile, College Board's Big Future bigfuture.collegeboard.org, and other appropriate resources. Make sure websites are accessible from school computers.
- Review supplemental activities provided in the Resource Guide and determine which activities to use to make the event fun and exciting.
- Encourage teachers to begin connecting classroom lessons to the school's campaign.

6 Weeks Prior to Event

- Provide eligible students with application fee waiver information.
- Begin implementing ACAC supplemental activities. Recommendations are included in the Resource Guide.
- Contact the Mayor's office to have ACAC Month proclaimed. If other schools in the district are hosting events, coordinate with them on the request.

5 Weeks Prior to Event

- Confirm that computer facilities are reserved for the event and that the school's technology coordinator is ready and willing to serve should any technology issues

arise.

4 Weeks Prior to Event

- Create a schedule for volunteers, taking into account their availability, as well as, breaks and lunch.

3 Weeks Prior to Event

- Remind families of the school's ACAC events using the phone tree. Let them know that their child may need their help to prepare. Suggested information to share is included in this manual.
- Send a message to volunteers. Give event details including when/where to meet.

2 Weeks Prior to Event

- Remind teachers, counselors, and administrators of the event schedule. Ensure all seniors will have the opportunity to participate.
- Be sure that sites have and use event materials provided by WSAC.

1 Week Prior to Event

- Make an announcement to remind students that the event begins next week, and remind them that they will need to: 1) Know where they would like to apply. 2) Have a plan for application fees and fee waivers. 3) Write required essays or personal statements, have them proofed, in a final version, and bring to the event. 4) Gather the information needed to complete applications. Some information may need to come from parents (residency information, social security number, etc.).
- Make final preparations for the event.
- Encourage school staff to wear college clothing on the day(s) of the event.
- Alert local media about the event. A press release is included in the Resource Guide.
- Send volunteers a reminder about the event a day or two prior to the event.
- Place a reminder about the event of the school's website home page

Enjoy the College Application Event!

- Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support.
- Let them know what their role is for the day; ensure they receive a badge or sticker identifying them as a volunteer.
- Students should "sign-out" of the event and provide the requested information.
- Students and site coordinators should complete requested surveys.

Site Coordinator Event Prep Checklist

- Identify and reserve site for the ACAC event.**
- Identify a school-wide implementation team to build support and assist with tasks.**
Possible roles include a school activities coordinator, communication coordinator, student readiness coordinator, volunteer coordinator, and an evaluation coordinator.
- Identify and implement school-wide activities for building enthusiasm.**
Examples:
 - College gear or swag Fridays.
 - College trivia contests.
 - College bulletin boards.
 - “College opens doors” signs on offices and classroom doors.
 - College alumni days.
 - College exploration assignments.
 - Family/student nights.
- Identify and implement frequent event promotion – before and after event.**
Examples:
 - Posters and banners.
 - Press releases.
 - PSAs.
 - School newsletters.
 - Postings on school website, electronic boards, outdoor signs.
 - “I APPLIED!” stickers.
- Prepare students for the event.**
Examples:
 - Have students research schools.
 - Sponsor and/or support participation in college fairs or college visits.
 - Hold senior meetings that allow them to become familiar with application web portals.
 - Distribute College Application information sheet for students to fill out prior to the event.
- Recruit and train volunteers to assist with the event.**
Examples:
 - Teachers and administrators, school board members, retired educators.
 - Local college and university administrators, college access personnel (GEAR UP, TRiO, etc.), admissions representatives, financial aid representatives, and students.
 - Local business leaders.
 - Local political representatives.
 - Local Chamber of Commerce.
 - Faith-based and community organizations.
 - Previous high school graduates who attended college.
 - Parents and guardians.
- Identify and create a handout regarding application payment options;** secure application fee waivers from ACT, College Board, or NACAC for eligible students.
- Hold college application event.**
 - Have students complete the ACAC Student Survey when done. Send thank you notes.

Site Coordinator Event Reminders

- 1** Check computers to ensure that the school or district has not blocked any pertinent websites.
 - 2** Have a list of any phone numbers that may be needed during the event to problem-solve application questions. Always have a cell phone or landline available to use during events.
 - 3** Post the following items in each computer lab or classroom where students will be completing online applications. Students may need to reference this information when completing applications.
 - School mailing address.
 - School phone number.
 - Fax number.
 - School code.
 - Each counselor’s contact information, including e-mail address.
 - Past and upcoming SAT and ACT dates.*
- *Most colleges ask students to list the dates on which they took the test or when they plan to take it.
- 4** Have seniors sign-in as they arrive. Refer to the sample sign-in sheet or create one. Note: Sites will need the information from the sign-in sheets to complete the required post-event survey.
 - 5** Distribute the student handout, “I Applied... Now What?” to reference during and after the application process.
 - 6** Be sure that students complete and submit application(s), print confirmation page(s) or save application(s) for final work within the next day or two.
 - 7** After students have completed the desired number of college applications:
 - Remind each student to review “I Applied...Now What?”
 - Encourage students to attend a College Goal Washington event.
 - Have students complete the Student Survey after they finish submitting applications at the end of the event.

Event Day Materials

Make sure the following handouts are available for the college application event. Find these handouts in the Resource Guide.

1. ACAC Sign-Out Sheet

Use a sign-out sheet to keep track of individual student's information. This form helps sites know who participated in the program, where they applied, and who needs a follow-up after the initiative. Assign this task to a volunteer.

2. I Applied, Now What? Handout

Distribute to students after they complete their applications. The handout includes a list of helpful reminders and next steps that students will need to do in order to complete the college application and financial application process.

3. Student Instructions on Day of Event

This handout details the step-by-step process students will need to complete during the day of the event including where to login to apply to college online, how to register for a FSA ID, and a reminder of the handouts available after the event. A critical component to a student completing the college admissions and financial aid application processes is submitting a complete FAFSA. The first step in completing the FAFSA is registering for an FSA ID. WSAC encourages all participating schools to make FSA ID registration a part of their ACAC event. All students participating in the school's ACAC event should register for their FSA ID immediately following the submission of their college application(s).

Survey Reminder

At the event, please make sure students fill out the Washington ACAC survey. WSAC will provide a link once it is available. Remember that if more than ten students at the school complete the student survey, site leads will receive an individualized school report containing student survey responses. The survey will help WSAC better plan next year's ACAC program, and will give the school valuable data about college applications.

After the College Application Event

Ensure that students complete their college applications by submitting any materials that institutions may require such as high school transcripts, college entrance exam scores, recommendation letters, etc. In addition, students should be encouraged to submit additional applications after the event if they did not have time to complete as many as they wanted to during the event.

The school team should meet after the ACAC program to discuss what worked and identify areas for improvement. Share the results of the program and identify a plan to follow-up with participating students to ensure they complete the application process (by submitting transcripts, test scores, etc.) and that they submit a completed FAFSA or WASFA.

Once WSAC processes and compiles survey data, staff will send survey reports to schools with more than 10 survey respondents. WSAC will also ask leads to complete a site coordinator survey to evaluate the ACAC program and help staff plan for next year. The 12th Year program will hold an optional debrief webinar as well.

Post-event activities include:

- Take students through the post-event survey via the link provided by the State Coordinator.
- Communicate the program's impact with the local media. A *post-event press release* is included in the Resource Guide.
- Thank the volunteers. A *sample thank you letter* is included in the Resource Guide.
- Follow-up with school team and celebrate success.

Other post-event activities are included in the Resource Guide.

COLLEGE GOAL WASHINGTON SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Event Planning and Preparation

This chapter provides site leads with resources and guidance to build an event from the ground up.

Choose a Event Model

CGW has evolved into three distinct types of events targeting various audiences. Decide the type of event to offer so site leads can be consistent in message and clear about the overall purpose of the event. If the school or organization has previously hosted a College Goal event, site leads may already know which model to pursue. If not, answer these questions to help choose a model that fits the target populations' needs.

- How many students or FAFSA/WASFA filers are expected to attend the event?
- How many volunteers or support staff are expected to help? How many are needed?
- What are some possible site locations for the event?
- What types of resources are available at the site?
- How big is the venue?
- Who is the target audience?
- How and where will the lead and support team, focus outreach efforts to advertise this event?
- What resources can sites offer at the event?
 - Workshops or seminars?
 - One-on-one help with FAFSA or WASFA? Scholarship workshops?
 - Multi-lingual assistance?
 - College planning assistance?
 - College Bound Scholarship information?

Model 1: FAFSA/WASFA Filing and Support Only

This type of event offers FAFSA and WASFA filing assistance and support staff to answer attendee's questions. The majority of CGW sites use this model. The focus and goal of this event is to have participants submit an initial application before leaving or have their questions answered regarding a previously submitted application. Promote this event in high schools to graduating seniors and at local colleges. These events work well at sites where space is limited. Because this model focuses on application submission and one-on-one help, recruit at least one application helper for every eight students expected to attend. Use a room with at least 20-25 computers with Internet access for this event.

Model 2: FAFSA/WASFA Filing + Understanding Financial Aid

This type of event offers financial aid application filing assistance along with workshops and resources to help all attendees understand financial aid, the award process, and how to pay for college. The target audience for this type of event includes juniors, graduating seniors, and current college students. This model focuses on both application filing and the financial aid process. Sites will need to recruit presenters.

Model 3: FAFSA/WASFA Filing + College Planning and Preparation

This type of event offers workshops and activities that share information about the college planning process, college applications, scholarship searching, College Bound, FAFSA4Caster, and more. This model is the largest event, with the potential for hundreds of attendees. It may have an overall feeling of a college fair. This style may require more planning on a site's part, but the benefits to the entire student population may be the greatest reward.

Set an event-day agenda

After the site has chosen a model, setting the agenda becomes easier. Will the site need just one computer lab for application-filing? Does the site need several rooms to offer workshops? Will there be several workshops to choose from at a time? The agenda outlines the offerings and makes the process of navigating the event much simpler. Include a copy in every registration packet. *Sample agendas* are located in the Resource Guide for reference.

Assemble a support team

The next chapter outlines responsibilities of the team members leads will be recruiting. Delegate tasks and seek quality volunteers to ensure a successful CGW event. Let the team know what is needed from them and what kind of support they can expect from site leads. The support team may also be required to attend webinars and training provided by WSAC.

Go online

Use the website www.readysetgrad.org/college-goal to find nearby events. Feel free to collaborate with other site leads by offering helpful suggestions, posing questions, and potentially teaming up on marketing and promotion efforts.

Stay in touch

Site leads should check their inbox for helpful emails and communications from WSAC. For questions or concerns, contact WSAC staff (cgw@wsac.wa.gov or 360-753-7800).

Site Lead Planning Timeline

Planning

This is a general timeline to help leads organize events over the coming months.

5 Weeks Prior to Event

- Decide event details, such as location, time, date, and model.
- Recruit a support team and assign tasks.
- Reserve needed rooms.
- Order materials from FSA Publications <http://www.fsapubs.gov/>
- Work with WSAC to obtain publicity and event-day materials.

4 Weeks Prior to Event

- Set an event-day.
- Attend site lead training coordinated by WSAC, which will be recorded for those who cannot participate live.
- Organize and hold check-in meetings with the support team.
- Create a volunteer training plan.
- Check in with fundraising lead about donations or sponsorships, if needed.
- Ensure presenters or special guests are committed to attending and make necessary arrangements.
- Check on outreach and advertising efforts.

3 Weeks Prior to Event

- Continue working with the support team to ensure everyone is on track.
- Finalize event agenda.
- Print signage.
- Continue working with the support team to ensure everyone is on track.

Implementation

1-2 Weeks Prior to Event

- Two weeks prior to the event, issue the *press release* (see Resource Guide) to the local newspaper.
- Communicate with the support team to ensure everything is on track. Work with the volunteer lead to ensure that the site has enough event-day volunteers scheduled.
- Check with IT staff at site to ensure attendees can access internet, email, <http://fafsa.gov/> and <http://www.readysetgrad.org/wasfa> on the day of the event.
- Prepare participation packets ahead of time. Include the following documents:
 - Event agenda.
 - Event map.
 - Link to student/family participant survey.
 - Federal financial aid information from <http://www.fsapubs.gov/>
 - Scholarship searching: theWashBoard.org.
- Gather supplies (e.g., pens, tables, chairs, signage, etc.).

CGW Event Day Coordination

Invite the support team to help get the site completely ready before anyone comes in the door. Here is a suggested timeline for an event day.

2 HOURS PRIOR TO START

- Post signs to help attendees find the event.
- Check the facility for restrooms, handicap access, and any other logistical issues.
- Set up all needed presentation equipment.
- Check any sound equipment being used.
- Check each computer to make sure that all pertinent websites are accessible. Make sure computers are loaded to fafsa.gov or to readysetgrad.org/wasfa. Don't forget about Yahoo! or Gmail, which students may use to get their FSA ID.
- Ensure that any rooms used for workshops or presentations are unlocked and ready.

1 HOUR PRIOR TO START

- Set up tables for sign-in and survey collection.
- Set up refreshments, if available.
- Establish a volunteer area where personal items can be left securely.
- With the volunteer lead, identify any volunteers that can be used as interpreters. Volunteer interpreters should wear an identifying nametag that says, "I speak" in that language. For example "Hablo español."

30 MINUTES PRIOR TO START

- All volunteers should arrive 30 minutes prior to start.
- Introduce site leads and team. Have volunteers sign-in.
- Hand out volunteer nametags, event agendas, map, etc.
- Make sure volunteers understand the logistics of the event.
- Remind volunteers which duties they signed up for, and assign volunteers to other duties as needed.
- Log-in to all computers, if necessary.
- Greet presenter(s) and give them tutorial on using any presentation equipment.

SHOWTIME! Take a breath and smile.

Volunteer Tasks

Site leads are responsible for managing event logistics, including site setup, organization, technical problems, and volunteer management. Event-day volunteers will be crucial in assisting students and families. Assign volunteers to these tasks and remind them of their responsibilities on event day.

Information about volunteer roles is available here:

<http://readysetgrad.org/educators/grad/information-educators-and-volunteers>.

Registration Support

- Greet students and families, ensuring that everyone signs in properly.
- Distribute materials, such as surveys, Federal Student Aid publications, and other information about financial aid.

Site Greeters and Guides

- Welcome all attendees and direct attendees to the appropriate area/room.
- Ask greeters to stay at the door and direct attendees to survey computers as they leave.

FAFSA/WASFA Expert

- Answer tough FAFSA and WASFA questions and provide expert guidance.

DREAMer Advisor

- Assist DREAMers with WASFA questions and provide general information on support services for DREAMers at college. Should be knowledgeable about HB 1079 and DACA.

FAFSA/WASFA Helper

- Give one-on-one assistance to students and families filing the FAFSA or the WASFA. Requires basic knowledge of online FAFSA and WASFA filing and FAQs. WSAC recommends 1:8 ratio of helpers to students per room. Prior to the event, all FAFSA/WASFA helpers should participate in training. Training will be via two webinars. The date and time are TBD and will be announced once the Department of Education completes their online FAFSA updates. These volunteers should ask each FAFSA/WASFA filer to complete the CGW online survey.

Workshop Presenters

- Present on pre-arranged topics for the event. May present on financial aid and college planning topics in addition to offering FAFSA filing support. Presenters should check-in at the registration desk and sign in.

Technical, Audio, and Visual Support

- Be available to troubleshoot potential computer problems in FAFSA/WASFA filing room.
- Be available to troubleshoot problems with presentation or audio equipment.
- Prepare email access and computers prior to the start of the event. FAFSA.gov often communicates with students via email, so ensure that Gmail, Yahoo, and similar email servers can be accessed from school computers.
- Swap mobile numbers with IT volunteers in the event of emergency.

Optional Roles

The roles of FAFSA/WASFA expert and DREAMer Advisor are optional for College Goal sites. The fall and winter are busy times for financial aid staff. They receive many requests to assist with CGW and other financial aid events. Site leads will be likely be able to answer students and families FAQs if they participate in training webinars.

WSAC will host a training entitled “FAFSA: Assisting Students.” This training will be for high school counselors and other staff who work with underrepresented populations. It will cover working with independent students, working with homeless students, and include a Q&A session.

If site leads are new to high school counseling or to CGW, recruit a FAFSA/WASFA expert and a DREAMer Advisor for the event. WSAC can help programs make connections with financial aid staff at local colleges or universities. Experienced sites may not need volunteers in these roles at events and may ask a financial aid staff person to be “on call” in the event of tough questions. WSAC staff is also available to be an “on call” FAFSA/WASFA expert as well.

Event Day Support

There is help available if things go off track. If there is a problem with the fafsa.gov website, call 1-800-4-FED-AID until 9 PM PST. Customer service representatives can also assist students and families with FAFSA questions if needed.

Evaluation

Each site lead needs to complete a survey about their event. Each student/family may complete a survey about their experience. Site leads will receive a link to these online surveys and instructions prior to the event. Results are available to site leads if 10 or more attendees complete the survey. In addition, survey results will be published as a part of state reports on program success.

Event Wrap Up & Completion

Follow-up

Follow-up with participants to remind them of the steps they need to take to accept their awards later this year. WSAC created the “next steps” postcard that sites can give to students at College Goal events.

Students will start to receive acceptance and award letters in March and April. Often students need assistance understanding the terms of award packages. Find a *glossary of terms* in the Resource Guide to assist students in discussing financial aid award packages.

If students ask in-depth questions about being selected for verification or need further assistance with understanding financial aid award letters, WSAC recommends they contact their college financial aid office. Typically, postsecondary institutions will communicate next steps with students via email. Remind students to check email often and to take care of anything the college requires promptly.

Students who have a complete College Bound Scholarship (CBS) application on file with WSAC and submit either a FAFSA or a WASFA will receive a follow-up email from the CBS team. The email sent to students who file the FAFSA will indicate one of two things:

- Their FAFSA matched with their CBS application and it is complete; or
- Their FAFSA matched with their CBS application but it is incomplete or has errors. Instructions will be provided for correcting the errors. After students correct the error, they will receive a confirmation email indicating their FAFSA is complete and is matched to their CBS application.

For students who file the WASFA, they will receive one email letting them know that their WASFA matched their original CBS application. That email will provide instructions for the next steps to take. Note: U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens file the FAFSA. Students who cannot file the FAFSA, due to immigration status file the WASFA.

Remember to send out a *thank-you card or letter to the volunteers* and contributors. Find a template in the Resource Guide. Volunteers will be interested in receiving information about the results of the event. Volunteer retention from one year to the next is key in ensuring that future events go smoothly. Keep volunteers motivated, ask their opinion about future events, and maintain contact with them.

Planning for Next Year

When site leads complete a survey for this year’s event, the school or organization will be asked to participate as a site again next year. Schools and organizations may also sign up online as a site in March.



The American College Application Campaign and College Goal Washington are a part of the 12th Year Campaign, an initiative administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) with support from the Washington State GEAR UP and College Bound programs, and from the Washington State Employees Credit Union. For more information and resources to help with your college preparation, visit www.readysetgrad.org.

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