OCTOBER 2013

SITE COORDINATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

A Guide to Planning, Promoting, and Hosting
College Knowledge Month Events

To download a copy of this guide, visit http://bit.ly/ckm4sitecoordinators

A MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Thank you for agreeing to host College Knowledge Month at your school. Your involvement will ensure the success of the statewide College Knowledge Month effort.

Explore. Plan. Apply!
The main goal of this initiative is to provide every graduating high school senior with the preparation, opportunity, and support needed to apply to college. A month-long scope will allow students to do more than just submit an application. Applying is only *one step* of the college application process – the result of thoughtful exploration and planning. With this time frame, students can participate in the process at their own pace -- and schools can align this initiative with the many college exploration activities that are already taking place in the fall of the academic year.

This guide gives site coordinators the basic tools to plan, promote, and host successful College Knowledge Month events. Please be sure to complete these important tasks:

1. Schedule computer lab time during October to allow students the opportunity to explore colleges and to submit college applications.

2. With a focus on underrepresented students, invite all seniors at your school to participate.

3. Review the Activities List (page 13) and Promotional Ideas (page 27). Integrate these activities into your programming. Notify school personnel about the event(s) and what is expected.

4. To make your event(s) run smoothly, you will need help from volunteers from colleges and the community. Please consider your volunteer needs and how you will utilize them.

5. Visit http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/collegeknowledge for additional resources and tools to build a college-going culture at your school.

We sincerely appreciate all of the effort and time that you have committed to make this month a success. Your involvement will help Minnesota's students and families learn more about their options for college and pursue the dream of completing postsecondary education. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about College Knowledge Month.

Sincerely,
The MN College Knowledge Month Steering Committee
Beth Barsness, MN Department of Education | 651.582.8336 or beth.barsness@state.mn.us
Angie Johnson, MN Department of Education | 651.582.8478 or angie.johnson@state.mn.us

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background Information

2. Planning Your Events

Toolkit Items:
   a.   Site Coordinator Planning Checklist
   b.   My Life Plan Poster

3. Recruiting and Organizing Volunteers

Toolkit Items:
   c.   Volunteer or Donation Request Letter (Template)
   d.   Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members
   e.   Volunteer Reference Guide (Template)
   f.   Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

4. Promoting and Generating Excitement

Toolkit Items:
   g.   Press Release (Template)
   h.   Follow-Up Press Release (Template)
   i.   Student/Family Letter (Template)
   j.   College Knowledge Month Flyer (Template)

5. Working with Students

Toolkit Items (Site Coordinator Page):
   k.   Student Sign-in Sheet
   l.   NACAC Request for Admission Application Fee Waiver
   m.   Application Fees and Fee Waiver Information for Minnesota Schools

      n.   An Overview of the College Process for Minnesota Undocumented Students

Toolkit Items (Student Page):

      o.   October Theme Calendar
      p.   Applying to College: R U Ready?
      q.   Application Checklist for High School Seniors
      r.   Teacher Recommendation Request
      s.   College Comparison Worksheet
      t.   College Application Worksheet
      u.   I Applied . . . Now What?
      v.   Completing the FAFSA Flowchart

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Are you new to College Knowledge Month? This section provides a brief overview of what it means for your school to participate as an official College Knowledge Month site.

In this section:

What is College Knowledge Month?

Minnesota College Knowledge Month encourages students to take a significant step toward college by providing assistance and building excitement for the application process. Sponsored by a network of K12, higher education and nonprofit partners, the objectives of this project are as follows:

- To help schools establish and/or build upon a culture of college-readiness.
- To communicate to all students the importance of preparing for and applying to college.
- To engage and inform underrepresented students (first-generation college students, students of color, and low-income students) about postsecondary opportunities, culminating in the application process.
- To provide a statewide message and excitement about exploring and planning for college.
- To increase the number of Minnesota seniors who complete the college admissions process.

Hosting College Knowledge Month builds a college-going culture and allows your high school the opportunity to ensure all high school seniors strongly consider pursuing a postsecondary education. College Knowledge Month provides time and space to engage students in the college application and exploration process with a special focus on students of color, low-income and first generation students.

Background Information

College Knowledge Month is part of a national campaign under the American Council on Education, which piloted in Minnesota in 2011 as Minnesota College Application Week. The initiative was designed to provide an opportunity for high schools and postsecondary institutions to collaborate in a concentrated effort to engage, inform and support students with the college exploration and application process. The main goal of this College Application Week in 2012 was to increase the number of high school seniors completing a college application, with a special focus on assisting underrepresented students (first generation college students, students of color, and low-income students). In addition to Minnesota, a total of 21 states across the nation participated in the campaign this year, which included 1,110 schools. In recent years, several states have expanded their efforts to include month-long programming.

The Impact

2011	2012	2013
SITES		
17 pilot sites 10 add'l high school sites	106 high school sites 5 adult sites	116+ high school sites
STUDENTS SERVED (APPROXIMATE)		
3,000	16,000	25,000+
VOLUNTEERS		
101	185	TBD
APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED		
MN STATE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY SYSTEM (MnSCU)		
15,700	24,000	TBD
UNIVERSITY OF MN (TWIN CITIES)		
880	996	TBD

Note: At this time, matriculation data is not available. In addition, we do not have application data from Minnesota Private Colleges.

Beyond the Numbers

In addition to engaging and informing students about the postsecondary process, College Knowledge Month gives schools an opportunity to establish or build upon a culture of college readiness. It promotes ongoing discussions and partnerships among members of many professional organizations and agencies that serve a variety of stakeholders in the K-12 and higher education communities. The energy and collaboration surrounding this initiative reflect the commitment of many Minnesotans to ensure equitable pathways to higher education for all of our students.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was College Application Week changed to College Knowledge Month?
A month-long effort will allow students to do more than just submit an application. Applying is only *one step* of the college application process – the result of thoughtful exploration and planning. Within this expanded time frame, students can participate in the application process at their own pace -- and find the best college fit for them. Counselors and high school staff will have more time to draft recommendations, secure transcripts and/or fee waivers and support underrepresented students. Schools can build upon or establish a college-going culture by utilizing the college exploration activities that already take place in the fall of the academic year.

What does this mean for a participating school?
A month will allow schools time to integrate a college-readiness curriculum into their programming and communication with families. October is a natural time for this to occur, since there are already college exploration opportunities taking place across the state (i.e. National College Fair, local college fairs, early decision application deadlines, college visits). Schools will have access to volunteers earlier in the planning process this year – and will not have to compete with other schools/districts for their busy schedules if College Knowledge Month activities are spread throughout a month instead of a week.

What are the expectations for participating schools and site coordinators?
Your College Knowledge Month event(s) can occur any time during the month of October - schools are not required to participate in the entire month. Participating schools are expected to devote time and space during the school day for college exploration activities – including support for seniors to complete college applications. Schools are encouraged, but not required, to integrate other college exploration events into the month – such as essay writing workshops or a parent night. New schools should start small and build on what works well. Returning schools should expand on successes they have had in the past.

What support will participating schools and site coordinators receive?
The College Knowledge Month steering committee will provide resources, materials, support and training for registered sites to assist with their programming. **Volunteer information and student incentives will be available to sites that register by June 15**. (After that date, registrations will still be accepted, but access to volunteers cannot be guaranteed).

Planning Timeline
June 15 – Preferred Site Registration Deadline
August 12 – Site Coordinator Resource Manual available online – notified by email
August 12 – Site Coordinator Training Webinar available online – notified by email
August 16 – Volunteer Registration Deadline
September 1 – Site Coordinators receive volunteer contact information
September 20 – Site Coordinator Training Session (9:00 am – 12:00 pm), University of Minnesota

Questions?
Beth Barsness, MN Department of Education | 651.582.8336 or beth.barsness@state.mn.us
Angie Johnson, MN Department of Education | 651.582.8478 or angie.johnson@state.mn.us

SECTION 2: PLANNING YOUR EVENTS

College Knowledge Month events can be as big as your imagination will allow. With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your College Knowledge Month will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school. This section provides a comprehensive list of resources and ideas, important dates to engage students in college awareness activities during and after October, a step-by-step planning checklist for site coordinators, and general event reminders.

In this section:

Site Coordinator Resources

College Knowledge Month for Site Coordinators - http://bit.ly/ckm4sitecoordinators
- Site Coordinator Resource Guide (.pdf)
- Training WebEx (.ppt)
- Lesson Plans used in Site Coordinator training – which follow the October theme calendar
- Toolkit Items – These are individual documents that can be downloaded and used for programming at individual sites. Some of these documents are customizable (templates).

College Knowledge Month for Students - http://bit.ly/ckm4students
The Student page of the website lists several websites and documents for student use. Toolkit items o-v are listed here.

College Readiness Resources for Teachers, Counselors and Administrators - http://bit.ly/ckmcollegereadiness
This is a list of websites to use with students during the college exploration and application process. Some sites include lesson plans and activities with accompanying handouts (parent nights, financial aid nights, etc.). The lesson plans referenced in Site Coordinator training can be found here.

Activities List

In addition to working with seniors on applications in the computer lab, there are a variety of activities you can implement during College Knowledge Month to engage the whole school. Consider adding one or more of these activities to your schedule of events.

Coordinate Homeroom Workshops
Conduct workshops during homeroom with students throughout College Knowledge Month. Potential workshop topics include:

> Freshmen: Decision making, learning styles, study habits, high school transcript and academic planning, connection between school and careers, how to qualify for a scholarship, colleges and degrees offered, college admission criteria, etc.

> Sophomores: Progress reports, extracurricular activities, earning college credit during high school, world of work, college costs and ways to pay, college visits, PSAT, etc.

> Juniors: Money management, finding scholarships, admission process, ACT and SAT test preparation, preparing to apply, writing personal statements and essays, etc.

> Seniors: What to expect in college, resume writing, FAFSA, searching for scholarships, application essay writing, finding the right college, etc.

Host a Parent and Family Night
Sponsor a parent and family night and have parents, family members, and community members who have completed college participate in a panel to talk about their college choices, why they made them, and what they are currently doing. Invite parents and families to come with questions or discussion ideas.

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

Conduct "Trial Runs" in Classes
Complete a **sample** application (not for actual submission) with students. Teachers can go over the correct grammar and language to use on a college application. Stress the importance of using appropriate email addresses. It should sound professional and provide a good impression of the student. English teachers can incorporate writing college and scholarship essays into their class curriculum.

Encourage students to research a college major that they think they might be interested in pursuing. Have them identify which colleges offer the major, what type of job/careers are typically held by people obtaining a degree in that major, what type of courses are required to obtain a degree in that major, etc. and then have them present this information to their classmates.

Incorporate My Life Plan Activity (page 15)
This activity is a simple way to get all students engaged in dialogue with school staff regarding college access and preparation. Ask all staff to participate by completing the My Life Plan Poster (toolkit, b) and hanging it outside of their classroom/office during the week – or all year.

Important College Exploration Dates

Consider taking students to the National College Fair or a Minnesota Education Fair (MEF). These events also run in the spring. For a complete list of fairs, go to http://macac.wildapricot.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1617094

COLLEGE FAIRS		
DATE	**TIME**	**PLACE**
9/24	9am – 12pm 4:30 – 8pm	**MINNESOTA NATIONAL COLLEGE FAIR – Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, MN**
9/25	9am – 12pm	**MINNESOTA NATIONAL COLLEGE FAIR – Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, MN**
10/1	9am	Northland Community & Technical College – Thief River Falls, MN
10/2	9am	Bemidji State University – Bemidji, MN
10/3	9am	Central Lakes College - Brainerd, MN
10/3	5:30pm	Jefferson High School – Alexandria, MN
10/7	9am	Watertown-Mayer High School – Watertown, MN
10/7	6pm	Monticello High School – Monticello, MN
10/8	9am	St. Cloud State University – St. Cloud, MN
10/9	9am	Ridgewater College – Willmar, MN
10/10	9am	Minnesota State University – Mankato, MN
10/22	9am	Southwest Minnesota State University – Marshall, MN
10/22	1pm	Luverne High School – Luverne, MN
10/22	3:30pm	Minnesota West Community & Technical College – Pipestone, MN
10/23	9am	Fairmont High School - Fairmont, MN
10/23	4:30pm - 6pm	Riverland Community College - Owatonna, MN
10/24	9am	UCR Regional Sports Center – Rochester, MN

Encourage students to register and take the ACT test. For all testing dates during the 2013-2014 academic year, visit http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html

ACT DATES (2013)		
TEST DATE	**REGISTRATION DEADLINE**	**LATE FEE REQUIRED**
September 21	August 23	August 24 – September 6, 2013
October 26	September 27	September 28 – October 11, 2013
December 14	November 8	November 9-22, 2013

General Event Reminders

1. Check all computers and make sure that no pertinent websites are blocked by your school or district.

2. Make sure you have copies of the most up-to-date Application Fees and Fee Waiver Information for Minnesota Schools (toolkit, m). It would be a good idea to download and open this list on each computer so students can access college websites and admission pages. To access this document, go to http://bit.ly/ckm4sitecoordinators

3. Provide a handout explaining to students how they can obtain transcripts and fee waivers at your school.

4. 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
   - Phone number
   - Fax number
   - School code
   - Each counselor's contact information, including email address
   - Past and upcoming SAT and ACT dates

5. Have seniors sign in as they arrive. Refer to the Student Sign-in Sheet (toolkit, k).

6. Distribute any handouts you think would be helpful for students to reference during and after the application process (toolkit, a-v).

7. After your students have completed their college applications:

   - Remind each student to review the handouts you provide.

   - Distribute wristbands to students who have applied to college.

   - Encourage students to attend a Minnesota College Goal event – an opportunity for students and families to receive free, confidential assistance completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Minnesota College Goal workshops will be held at locations across the state February through May 2014. http://www.minnesotacollegegoal.org

8. CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS! Recognize the hard work you, your staff, your volunteers, and your students have done this month.

My Life Plan Activity

Purpose
- To identify staff members by their institutions of high education, degrees earned.
- To engage students in dialogue with faculty and staff members regarding college access, college preparation, application, etc.

Activities
- Have the entire faculty and staff complete and display the My Life Plan Poster (toolkit, b) outside of their classroom during the week and for the rest of the school year.
- Announce the posting date to the school and set aside some time (i.e. during homeroom/advisory period) and allow students to scavenger hunt for as many different schools as they can find, the school farthest away, the school with the most alumni, etc. Award small prizes or recognition.
- Celebrate any updates throughout the year.

Preparation
- Email a My Life Plan Poster to all faculty and staff and designate a posting date.

SECTION 3: RECRUITING AND ORGANIZING VOLUNTEERS

The community plays an important role in creating and sustaining a college-going culture. In addition to volunteers who are experts in the field, there are other people in your school and local community who might be willing to help with your College Knowledge Month events.

The College Knowledge Month steering committee will assist with volunteer needs by recruiting college admissions representatives, higher education experts, and other community personnel who can lend their support and technical expertise during your activities. **If your site registered by June 15, you will receive a list of volunteers and their contact information on September 1.**

In addition to their contact information, volunteers will indicate their area of expertise, which weeks they are available, and which sites they are able to assist. <u>Site coordinators should contact these volunteers as soon as possible to communicate their event needs</u>. Their availability is first-come, first-served.

In the following pages, you will find ideas for engaging, utilizing and communicating with volunteers.

In this section:

✓ **Toolkit Items:**
    i.   Volunteer or Donation Request Letter (Template)
    j.   Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members
    k.   Volunteer Reference Guide (Template)
    l.   Volunteer Thank You Letter (Template)

Whom to Involve

Students
Recruit students to help implement College Knowledge Month. Identify student leaders from each grade who would love to bring their own ideas to the table. Select student helpers from each grade and educate them about College Knowledge Month. Ask them to share implementation ideas and post and distribute materials. Or, students who have already completed their application(s) could help other students during the week as "college application ambassadors."

Recruit seniors to mentor freshmen, sophomores, and/or juniors on preparing for postsecondary education. Senior mentors can meet with assigned freshmen, sophomores, or juniors during College Knowledge Month or recruit them to assist during the week.

Ask students to promote the event through their Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Teachers
Teachers are your greatest allies in motivating students to pursue higher education. Share the calendar with them and ask for their help in brainstorming ways to make this event something the whole school embraces.

Ask teachers to incorporate college-planning and exploration activities into their classes leading up to College Knowledge Month. 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. (With the principal's permission), ask teachers to wear their favorite college gear during College Knowledge Month.

School Staff and Support Personnel
Successful College Knowledge Month sites often get the whole school community involved. Encourage your school staff, including custodians, cooks, administrative assistants, and bus drivers to wear college gear, post signs and information about College Knowledge Month, and to encourage students with whom they interact to apply or engage in the college process.

Community Representatives
Community involvement is crucial to the success of your event. Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your College Knowledge Month a success by either donating time and/or resources. Community members can serve as volunteers, provide prizes, or simply distribute information through their businesses or organizations. The presence of community members in your school can lend weight and excitement to the initiative and showcase your community's dedication to promoting student success. Groups to consider include:
- School alumni
- Students' families, the PTA/O, the School Improvement/Site Council
- Retired educators
- Community service, senior citizen, or religious organizations
- College and university representatives and faculty
- Business, community, and political leaders
- Youth programs (e.g. YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, 4-H, Girl and Boy Scout troops)
- TRIO program personnel

Volunteer Coordination

- Send all potential volunteers and/or groups a Volunteer Request Letter (toolkit, c) with a copy of An Overview for Teachers, Staff, Volunteers and Community Members (toolkit, d).

- Consider how you will utilize your volunteers. It is important for them to feel useful, active, and engaged. Identify specific responsibilities for your volunteers. For example, you may create shifts for greeting, sign-in, computer lab, other activities, etc.

- You will receive a list of volunteers after September 1. Contact them **as soon as possible** to reserve them for your event.

- Follow your school's security policy. Once you have received your volunteer sign-ups, remember to allow for enough time to conduct any necessary background checks, if required.

- Communicate with volunteers early and often. Create a system such as an e-mail distribution list or regular updates via text message. Be sure to contact all volunteers ahead of time to provide them with specifics such as a schedule, parking information, when to arrive, where the event will be held, options for lunch, etc.

- Finalize a volunteer list and, as a reminder, send information notifying volunteers of the event schedule and details one week prior to the event.

- If possible, check-in with and confirm volunteer participation a day or two before they will be at your site (via phone call or email).

- Provide name tags for volunteers on the day of the event.

- Conduct a quick orientation, perhaps the morning of the event, to familiarize volunteers on the details of your event.

- Provide volunteers with a Volunteer Reference Guide (toolkit, e).

- Make sure to thank all volunteers for their help during College Knowledge Month! Refer to the Volunteer Thank You Letter (toolkit, f).

- Ask volunteers to complete the following online evaluation: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CAWVolunteerSurvey. This link is also referenced in the Volunteer Thank You Letter.

SECTION 4: PROMOTING AND GENERATING EXCITEMENT

Your College Knowledge Month event(s) can be as big as your imagination will allow. With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your College Knowledge Month will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school.

The following pages provide promotional ideas and publicity materials to get everyone excited about your college exploration and awareness events during College Knowledge Month.

In this section:
✓ **Toolkit Items:**
  g. Press Release (Template)
  h. Follow-Up Press Release (Template)
  i. Student/Family Letter (Template)
  j. College Knowledge Month Flyer (Template)

Promotional Ideas List

Get the Word Out
Use daily PA announcements to generate awareness of College Knowledge Month activities at your school. If your school has a morning news program, coordinate with the producers to feature a countdown or a fun fact each morning leading up to the event. Coordinate interviews with students who plan to attend/participate in the event. Sample PA announcement:

> *More than 60 percent of all jobs will require some form of education and training after high school. The more you learn, the more you'll earn. That's why our school is participating in Minnesota College Knowledge Month.*
>
> *College Knowledge Month is happening during the month of October – and it's your opportunity to learn more about your options for education and training beyond high school. Freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors, you can explore certificate programs, two-year degree programs, and four-year degree programs. Seniors, if you haven't already applied to college, College Knowledge Month is a great opportunity to take control of your future and apply!*

Student newspapers are also a great place to highlight the event. Encourage student writers to feature stories.

Send a <u>Press Release</u> (toolkit, g) to alert local newspapers and TV stations about your event(s).

Host a College "Prep Rally"
Talk with your school administrators about holding a kick-off "prep rally" to get everyone in the college frame of mind. Ask students to wear college gear from their favorite schools. Introduce seniors who have already been accepted into a school or certificate program and have them tell the student body the one thing they are most looking forward to in college or why they selected the school or program they did. Incorporate contests and fun activities – and get your student clubs involved in building enthusiasm.

Friendly Competition
Sponsor a class contest between the different grades to inspire all students to take the college preparation process seriously during College Knowledge Month. Classes can compete against each other to design the best "College Application Wall," or come up with the best idea to promote College Knowledge Month and college awareness.

Dress the Part
During College Knowledge Month, encourage teachers and staff to wear a t-shirt, sweatshirt, or hat from the college they attended, or have them bring in their college yearbook or other items with their college mascot to share with students and decorate their classrooms or work spaces.

Decorate the School
Make sure to hang copies of the College Knowledge Month Flyer (toolkit, j) and College Knowledge Month Poster throughout your school to publicize College Knowledge Month.

Create a "College Wall." Encourage seniors to write the names of the colleges to which they have applied on banners or strips of construction paper to hang in a main hallway. Highlight college names when acceptances are received. If available, enlist the support of art teachers, as they may be helpful in developing additional promotional materials.

Give Away College Gear
Hold drawings and coordinate contests during College Knowledge Month. Ask colleges and universities to donate promotional items (banners, hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) and business to provide donations that graduating seniors can use in college (e.g. microwaves, coffee pots, bedding, gas cards) to use as giveaways during your event.

Communicate!
Send letters or email reminders to all parents, students, and school staff. Also include information in the school newsletter. You can use the Student/Family Letter (toolkit, i) as a guide.

SECTION 5: WORKING WITH STUDENTS

The following pages provide general instructions and support for working with students on college exploration and applications during College Knowledge Month. Several handouts are included that students may find helpful as they navigate through the process of planning, exploring and applying for colleges – including the next steps after submitting an application.

In this section:

- ✓ **Toolkit Items (Site Coordinator Page):**
    - k.   Student Sign-in Sheet
    - l.   NACAC Request for Admission Application Fee Waiver
    - m.   Application Fees and Fee Waiver Information for Minnesota Schools
    - n.   An Overview of the College Process for Minnesota Undocumented Students
- ✓ **Toolkit Items – (Student Page):**
    - o.   October Theme Calendar
    - p.   Applying to College: R U Ready?
    - q.   Application Checklist for High School Seniors
    - r.   Teacher Recommendation Request
    - s.   College Comparison Worksheet
    - t.   College Application Worksheet
    - u.   I Applied . . . Now What?
    - v.   Completing the FAFSA Flowchart

Preparing Students for College Knowledge Month

Encourage students to complete college research prior to the event.
To help ensure students are able to make the most of their College Knowledge Month experience, students should arrive to the computer lab with a list of colleges that they have determined would be a good match for them and to which they would like to apply. If your school has an advisory program, advisors could incorporate college research into their interactions with seniors. Additionally, consider developing a worksheet or online activity to help guide students through the process of researching colleges. College characteristics students should be encouraged to consider include:

- Location
- Size
- Available majors
- Available financial aid as well as the average net price
- Admissions requirements
- Characteristics of incoming freshman class
- Graduation rate

Have seniors complete the Application Checklist for High School Seniors (toolkit, q)
This document will help ensure students have the information needed to complete an application for college admission.

Encourage students to become familiar with application fee payment options prior to the event.
We have compiled a list of Application Fees and Fee Waiver Information at Minnesota Schools (toolkit, m). This list identifies which schools do not charge fees (during College Knowledge Month and throughout the year), which schools accept the common Application, and links to more admissions information.

- Students should be encouraged to meet with their high school counselor to determine if they are eligible for a fee waiver. Students can use the NACAC Request for Admission Application Fee Waiver (toolkit, l). Refer to Application Fee Eligibility and FAQs (page25).
- Students not eligible for a fee waiver should conduct research to determine the amount of the required application fee for the college to which they plan to apply. They should also investigate payment methods accepted by the college (e.g., credit card, online check, mailed check, etc.).

For colleges that require payment information to be entered online in order to complete the application submission process, students should be made aware of the following options which may be available to them:

- Save the application and submit it at home later when they have access to a payment method.
- Purchase a prepaid credit card in the amount of the application fee so credit card information can be entered into the online application.
- Students should bring the appropriate payment information to the event.

Provide students with information about the Common Application.
Make sure they know if a college they are considering accepts or requires the Common Application instead of a school-specific application. This information is provided on the list of Application Fees and Fee Waiver Information at Minnesota Schools (toolkit, m). If students plan to complete the Common Application during the event, they will need to do their research and prepare for it ahead of time because it is typically longer and more detailed than other applications. For more information, visit www.commonapp.org.

Student FAQs on Applications

Enrollment Information

What is my entering term and year? Most students will select the Fall semester following senior year; however, choose the summer option if you intend to attend summer school prior to Fall enrollment.

What is my entrance status? The following are definitions for each status:

> Freshman: This will be the first college in which you enroll after graduating high from school. Check this even if you have advanced placement (AP) credit, or dual enrollment, or have earned college credit in high school.
> Transfer: If you are graduating high school in the coming year and going directly to college, you are not a transfer student even if you have college credit.
> Non Degree: You want to take college course(s) but are not seeking a degree.

What is my desired major? Under First Choice, you can choose your first choice of majors. You may check "Undecided." Please note that you can change your major during your college program.

Address

Can I list a Post Office Box? You will need to also include a physical address even if you use a Post Office Box for your mailing address. Make sure this information is correct. The date the address became your permanent mailing address is the month and year you moved to this location which may even be your date of birth.

Personal Information

What types of personal information will I need to provide? If your school can submit your high school transcripts electronically, you will need the school code to put on the application.

College Information

What should I list for current college courses in progress or planned, including the term (to be) taken, course subject and number (example: BIO 1001), credit hours, and college/university? Please note that dual enrollment (high school and college classes) may be added here; however, do not list AP courses.

Family Information

What family information am I required to submit? You will need to answer the following required question: Are your father and/or mother living? Also, *Legal Guardian Information* is the same information requested for father and mother and Emergency Contact Information is required if it is other than parent or guardian.

Activities and Interests

Do I have to list all my activities and interests for each college application? If you have a significant number of activities and interests that you wish to include, you might consider putting them on a flash drive to cut and paste to your applications.

Campus Specific Information

What additional information will I need to include for each college application? This information varies by educational institution. You can find more information by looking at the campus website.

Miscellaneous Information

What types of questions will I be asked about my past criminal activity? Virtually all campuses require students to answer questions about legal infractions. Answering "yes" to one or more of the questions will not necessarily preclude your being admitted. However, your failure to provide complete, accurate, and truthful information can be grounds to deny or withdraw your admission, dismiss you, or subject you to disciplinary sanctions after enrollment. A campus may spot-check records and obtain official court and/or school documentation to ensure accuracy, and these campuses may share pertinent information as needed for the safety of others. Some campuses have a process for conducting criminal background checks on applicants which may or may not happen with regard to your application.

Complete honesty is expected.

Application Fee Eligibility & FAQs for the NACAC Fee Waiver

Students who have limited financial resources and meet the requirements below may use the NACAC Request for Application Fee Waiver Form (toolkit, l) when applying for college. The form helps ensure that access to college is possible for all students. The form is for traditional high school students applying to postsecondary colleges or universities in the fall immediately following high school graduation.

Students are eligible to use the form if:
- Student has received or is eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver.
- Student is enrolled in or eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL).
- Student's annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
- Student is enrolled in a federal, state or local program that aids student from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound).
- Student's family receives public assistance
- Student lives in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or is homeless.
- Student is a ward of the state or an orphan.

Gap year students, transfer students or individuals choosing to defer applying to college rather than immediately transitioning after high school graduation are not eligible to use NACAC's Request for Application Fee Waiver Form. NACAC recommends that prospective students in these categories contact the admission office of the institution(s) to which they are seeking admission regarding an institutional fee waiver.

Requirements for completing the form:
- Students must complete the student section in its entirety.
- The student's secondary school counselor, independent counselor or TRIO representative must verify that the student is eligible to use the form.
- The high school's raised seal or stamp must be included on the form.
- The form must be mailed directly to the admission office of the college or university to which the student is seeking admission.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many fee waiver requests may I submit?
The Application for Fee Waiver Request Form is intended to be used at the schools to which a student is most interested in attending. NACAC recommends limiting the use of the form to no more than four (4) schools. If the Request for Application Fee Waiver is not accepted by the college or university, the student must pay the application fee.

Does my guidance counselor need to sign the fee waiver form?
Yes. A secondary school counselor, Independent Counselor or TRIO representative must verify that the student is qualified to use the form.

My counselor is not a NACAC member; can I still use the form?
Although not required, it is preferable that the form is used by a NACAC member or member institution.

Where do I mail the form?
Mail the Fee Waiver Form directly to the admission office of the institution to which you are applying, even if you applied to the school online.

Is the school seal required?
Yes, the school seal or an official business card of the counselor is required to verify the information is accurate.

Is there a directory of colleges/universities who accept the forms? Does every school accept the form?
NACAC does not maintain a directory of institutions that accept the fee waiver form. Each institution reserves the right to accept or decline the request form. Some institutions have their own institutional application fee waivers as well.

What happens if I apply to a school and they do not accept the NACAC fee waiver?
Each institution makes the final decision to accept or decline fee waiver forms. If a fee waiver is declined, the student will be asked, by the institution, to pay the application fee.