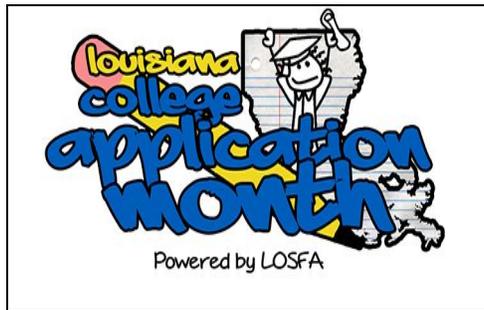




Volunteer Resource Manual

2014 Edition



Dear College Application Month Volunteer:

On behalf of the Louisiana College Application Month Campaign, thank you for volunteering! During the month of October our goal will be to provide all seniors at participating high schools the opportunity to apply to college.

While the focus of College Application Month is particularly on first-generation college students and students who may not otherwise apply to college, we encourage participating high schools to include activities for all students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors who have already applied to college. The involvement of volunteers in College Application Month will help these schools to build a college-going culture on their campuses.

This is the first year that College Application Month will be implemented statewide in Louisiana. We thank you for helping drive this program and we look forward to continuing this tradition across Louisiana for years to come.

Should you have any questions or concerns about your volunteer role during College Application Month please contact your schools site coordinator or either State Coordinator below:

Timenee Thomas, LA GEAR UP Coordinator
Timenee.thomas@la.gov
225.219.9409

Kristen O'Neil, Public Information Supervisor
koneil@osfa.la.gov
225.219.7578

Be sure to check the following websites www.lagearup.com or www.osfa.la.gov/collegeappmonth for program information for this year's College Application Month!

Thank you in advance for your commitment to this important college access event. Your participation will encourage Louisiana students and their families to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,

Timenee Thomas/Kristen O'Neil
Louisiana State Coordinators

WHAT'S IN A NAME? UNDERSTANDING THE WORD "COLLEGE"

College is important – there's no doubt about it. At least 60 percent of all new jobs in Louisiana will require a college education by 2018, and Louisiana needs tens of thousands more college graduates to build our economy¹. But what does that mean for our students?

Most workforce developers and education leaders use the word "college" to include any type of postsecondary education or education and training beyond high school. That means students have many options when it comes to attending college. But it also means a high school diploma is no longer enough.

On average, four-year college graduates earn more than double the salary of individuals who stopped their education after high school.² And students who complete some form of postsecondary education are far less likely to be unemployed than those with just a high school diploma.

Every Louisiana student should plan to complete some type of education beyond high school. The good news is Louisiana's colleges and universities offer a wide variety of education options to fit the unique needs of all of our state's students. Options include:

- ✓ **Certificate or Licensing Programs:** Certificate and licensing programs are specialized plans of study that are usually intended for students planning to pursue a trade. Most of these programs can be completed in a matter of months, and Louisiana's public community and technical colleges offer several certificate and licensing programs throughout the year. Additionally, some employers and/or trade groups offer such programs.
- ✓ **Associate's Degrees:** Associate's degrees are typically awarded to students who complete a two-year period of study at a college. These degrees are often required for technical fields, but students can also pursue two-year degrees in business or other professional careers. Students can earn an associate's degree at any of Louisiana's public community and technical colleges — and associate's degree students are often eligible for many financial aid programs.
- ✓ **Bachelor's Degrees:** Bachelor's degrees (or baccalaureate degrees) are typically awarded to students who complete a four-year period of study at a college or university. Students pursuing a bachelor's degree take classes in their career field and in general education subject areas. Bachelor's degree students also often qualify for state and federal financial aid programs.

¹ According to data from Louisiana's Center on Education and the Workforce.

² According to data from the College Board's 2010 "Education Pays" report.

Volunteer Resource Manual

We intend for these documents to be a useful guide for Site Coordinators when seeking volunteers for a College Application Week event. This Resource Manual is available online at <http://lagearup.com/documents/> for you to download and print.

Managing Volunteers Information	5
Recruitment Letter	6
Volunteer Information on College Application Week	7
Volunteer Task List	8
Volunteer Training Agenda	9
Thank You Letter	10

Volunteer Resource Guide

Reaching out to community groups and members during College Application Week is an effective way to create a sustainable college-going culture at your school. Additionally, recruiting volunteers to help out or donate food and supplies will help ensure a successful event. We encourage sites to have at least two volunteers for every 25 students at your school on the day of the event. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Use the templates and resources provided to help recruit and inform volunteers for your event.

Managing Volunteers: Step-by-Step

Recruiting Volunteers

1. Identify contacts in your community that may be interested in helping make your College Application Month event a success by either donating time and/or resources. Some examples may include:
 - Local College Access Network
 - School Alumni
 - Students who have already completed their application/s (i.e., college application ambassadors)
 - Student families, PTA (Parent Teacher Association)
 - Local Volunteer Center
 - Senior or church groups
 - Community College and University representatives, faculty, admissions office and financial aid
 - Business, community, and political leaders
 - Youth programs (i.e., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way)
2. Send potential volunteer groups a College Application Month Volunteer Recruitment Letter.
3. When promoting your College Application Week event, always mention the need for volunteers in your communication.
4. Reach out to student leaders in your school. For example, students who have already completed their application/s could help other students during the event and be called the “college application ambassadors.”
5. Create a system for collecting volunteer information. Depending on your school district’s policy, you may need to conduct a background check.
6. We recommend having at least one staff member and two volunteers at all times when working with a group of 20-25.

Information for Volunteers

1. Identify specific responsibilities and duties for your volunteers. For example, you may create shifts for greeting, sign-in, computer lab, other activities, etc. Create a short explanation of each responsibility for volunteers to follow throughout the day.
2. Finalize a volunteer list and, as a reminder, send information using the following template notifying volunteers of event details.
3. Provide name tags for volunteers on the day of the event.
4. 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 to College Application Month.

Follow-Up

5. Send a thank you letter to all volunteers for their dedication to College Application Month!

Volunteer Recruitment Letter/Email

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS

September 2014

Dear (NAME OF ORGANIZATION),

(NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) is pleased to announce its participation in Louisiana’s College Application Month. In an effort to further expand college access initiatives, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance is sponsoring the Louisiana College Application Month to be held in the month of October, 2014. The goal of Louisiana College Application Month is to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college with a particular focus on helping first-generation low-income students, and students who may not otherwise apply to college.

Louisiana College Application Month can open the door for students by encouraging them to take a significant step toward college in their senior year. What began in 2005 as a single day at one high school in North Carolina has evolved into 19 statewide campaigns to help students. This year, Louisiana will be promoting this initiative statewide and in conjunction with both the Louisiana GEAR UP and Lafayette GEAR UP schools. A critical component of Louisiana College Application Month is the one-on-one supports provided by volunteers who help students fill out applications at school. Volunteers may include high school staff, registrars and admissions officers from nearby postsecondary institutions, and representatives from the community.

We will be hosting our event on (DATE(S) AND TIME) and would welcome representatives from (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) to visit our school during this exciting and important time. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities. Our students would really appreciate your help and support as they take a big step toward going to college.

If you or any of your colleagues at (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) are interested in working with (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) in any capacity **please contact me at** [site coordinator info]. Thank you!

(YOUR NAME)
(YOUR TITLE)
(CONTACT INFO)

Volunteer Information for College Application Week

Welcome to Louisiana College Application Month at (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL)! We appreciate your hard work and dedication to making college a reality for our students. Use this reference guide to familiarize yourself with more information about Louisiana College Application Month.

- ✓ **Louisiana College Application Month is an event** sponsored by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance and (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL).
- ✓ **Goal** of Louisiana College Application Month is to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college, with a particular focus on helping first-generation students' low-income students, and students who may not otherwise apply to college.
- ✓ Students are encouraged to **research different college and universities** in order to find the best fit for them **prior** to Louisiana College Application Month. The Federal Student Aid website <https://studentaid.ed.gov/resources> has **online resources** such as college search and comparison tools, career planning tools, information on how to apply to college, apply for financial aid pay for college and to help student's research scholarship opportunities. In addition, students are encourage to go to LOSFA's website at www.osfsa.la.gov to learn about scholarship programs such as TOPS and other forms of financial aid that are specifically geared towards Louisiana students. These tools are completely free to students and their families.
- ✓ Host sites are to provide a designated space and time **during the school day** for completing applications.
- ✓ Students may have questions about **application fees and waivers**. Note that some colleges and universities in Louisiana do not have an application fee. Up-to-date information is posted on www.lagearup.com and www.osfa.la.gov/collegeappmonth regarding application requirements.
- ✓ Some students may be **eligible for an application fee waiver** from their high school guidance counselor based on their family income status. If students have questions about eligibility, please refer them to their guidance counselor.
- ✓ For colleges that require an application fee, **students can use credit / debit cards online** or print their online application(s) and mail with a check to the college(s).
- ✓ In order to be **eligible for financial student aid**, college applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1 of their senior year. The earlier students and parents/guardians complete and submit this form, the better!
- ✓ **FAFSA – Louisiana College Goal Sunday** is a LOSFA promoted event held each year to assist seniors and their parents in completing and submitting their FAFSA. College Goal Sunday 2015 will be held March 1st at participating schools so mark your calendars! A listing of locations will be available at www.losfa.la.gov
- ✓ Remember you are there to assist students; don't recruit to a specific campus.
- ✓ Prior to arriving – confirm day/time you are expected with the site coordinator, confirm any visitor guidelines for the high school

Potential Volunteer Tasks

When assigning tasks, consider the expertise and comfort level of the volunteer with various roles. The power of the volunteer comes from students seeing that members of the broader community see education as an important goal.

- Post (possibly create) directional signs in the school for the event. Good signage is key to reminding students of the event and getting them to the right place.
- Greet students as they arrive. Make sure they use the sign-in sheet.
- Help students log on to the university website and begin an application. If the school does not have enough computers or stable online service, the site coordinator should be prepared with paper applications. As a volunteer, you can hand out the correct 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 to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed.
- Share personal college experiences with students.
- Instruct each student to complete an evaluation of their College Application Month experience (if applicable, not all sites may choose to use the student evaluation form). The evaluation may be an online Survey Monkey evaluation or a paper evaluation.
- Give an “I’ve Applied to College!” bracelet to each student after they’ve complete an application.
- Remind students to use the sign-out sheet before leaving. Site coordinators need to track where students applied.
- 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.
- Remind students to share their experience with others and to remember to attend the Financial Aid Day (FAFSA Day, College Goal Sunday, etc.) that will be held in your community. Handouts may be available regarding the upcoming Financial Aid events.
- Wear a college t-shirt or sweatshirt.

Volunteer Training – Example Agenda

Training volunteers for College Application Month is not a complex task. You want to provide volunteers with enough information to be useful to you and the students but not so much as to overwhelm them. In addition to the very real assistance they can provide to ensure that College Application Month is successful, they also are likely to become college access advocates in the community.

Host sites are not required to provide a volunteer training. It is up to you based on who you have selected as volunteers and if they feel comfortable with the tasks you are expecting them to complete. You can provide it as a short face-to-face gathering either a week before the event or the day of the event. If your school requires a background check for non-school personnel to work with students on your campus, then please be sure to handle this requirement prior to the training.

I. Welcome and Thank You!

- have all volunteers sign in and provide you with name, phone number(s), and address (you will need the address later when you send a follow-up thank you note)

II. Purpose of College Application Month

- To encourage and assist all students to apply to college, especially those who are from low-income and first generation college families, because applying to college in the fall of their senior year will increase their options as they decide what to do after high school.
- To provide additional information to students about the college going process such as a) what to do when they hear back from an institution and b) how to apply for financial aid.
- To reinforce a college-going culture in the community.
- This is not a recruitment activity for a specific school. If a volunteer has a strong relationship (or love) for a particular school, it is important to leave it at the door.

III. College Application Month Logistics

- Provide a short tour of the school highlighting where the event will be held, principal's office, facilities they may use or go into and those that they should not
- Dates and Times College Application Month/Day will be held in our school
- Times that Volunteers are expected to be available (it is strongly recommended that they are asked to arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the start of the event)
- Assign tasks to be done by Volunteers (see task list)
- Review FAQs

IV. Questions?

V. Again – thank you!

Volunteer Thank You Letter

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS

December 2014

Dear (VOLUNTEER'S NAME),

On behalf of (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) I would like to personally thank you for volunteering your time at our Louisiana College Application Month event. This event could not have been a success without your help and the help of many others who volunteered their time.

During Louisiana College Application Month, (NUMBER OF SENIORS SUBMITTING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS) of our seniors submitted over (NUMBER OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED) college applications to colleges and universities across Louisiana. Thanks to our seniors' hard work and the assistance of volunteers like you, they are one step closer to actualizing their dreams of attending college!

Once again, (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time at College Application Month! We look forward to seeing you throughout the school year and especially at our event next year.

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME)
(YOUR TITLE)

Louisiana College Application Month is an initiative of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA). As the leader in the state's college access movement, LOSFA's mission is to promote and provide college access. For more information, visit www.osfa.la.gov.

A special thanks to the 2014 Louisiana College Application Month Implementation Committee:

The following partners will provide support, guidance and resource materials to all participating high schools leading up to Louisiana College Application Month. Planning, scheduling, and implementation of all Louisiana College Application Month initiatives are the responsibility of the host school.

- Council of Student Body Presidents (COSBP)
- Louisiana Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (LACRAO)
- Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU)
- Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR)
- Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS)
- Louisiana Education Loan Authority (LELA)
- Statewide and partnership GEAR UP
- TRIO/Education Talent Search Programs in Louisiana (LASAP)
- University of Louisiana System

LCAM would like to thank the College Foundation of North Carolina, the College Foundation of West Virginia, and the Michigan College Access Network for their help in creating this Resource Guide, of which sections have been adapted from their respective guides.