

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

Never underestimate students' need for help! Exit surveys of similar events have shown overwhelmingly that students considered the event a major factor in their decision to apply to college. Volunteer support is crucial to holding an event that will positively impact the students.

Consider setting up an online volunteer registration form. Many free online survey tools are available to help with this task. It can be helpful to collect the following information on the volunteer registration form:

- Volunteer name
- Email address
- Phone number
- Affiliation (name of postsecondary institution, company, nonprofit or government agency)
- Area of expertise
- Hours available

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 your school policy requires this.

Utilize student and other leadership in the school as volunteers for the event.

Enlist teachers. They can volunteer during a planning period and/or to dedicate class time for college-related activities, such as writing college essays, researching earning potential of college graduates, etc.

Identify contacts in the community. Civic groups and community organizations may be interested by donating time and/or resources. Examples are: school alumni, parents and families of students, PTA members, senior citizens, church groups, college students, college representatives, and business, community and political leaders.

Stress that College App Week events are not a recruitment opportunity for colleges.

College representatives are highly encouraged to attend, but they should not be allowed to use the event as a recruiting tool. Volunteers should help students during the application process and should not simply communicate information about their colleges.

Have plenty of volunteers. It is recommended that you plan to have one volunteer for every four or five computers in use during the event. Extras may be needed to assist with sign-in, printers, etc., and to provide the opportunity for volunteers to take breaks.

Communicate with volunteers early and often. Create a system such as an email distribution list or regular updates via text message. Be sure to contact all volunteers ahead of time to provide them with specifics such as parking, when to arrive, where to go to check in, options for lunch, etc.

Assign each volunteer a specific responsibility. Take into account areas of expertise (e.g., greeting students, helping students complete their applications and exit surveys, answering financial aid questions, etc.). Consider collecting areas of expertise during the volunteer registration process to facilitate the volunteer assignment.

Provide volunteers with a printed schedule. Include lunch times and breaks when no students will be in the lab/media center/classroom.

Follow up with a thank you letter. Write to all participating volunteers, thanking them for their dedication and support in making the event a success. This is a great way to leave volunteers with a positive feeling toward the event and to increase the chances they will volunteer again.