



FREE



**COLLEGE
APPLICATION**



WEEK

TOOLKIT

**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD



A message from Commissioner Wynn Rosser:

Thank you for participating in Texas's Free College Application Week, a statewide initiative that helps Texas residents apply to public colleges at no cost during the second full week of October from Oct. 12-18, 2026, (Monday-Sunday).

Created by Senate Bill 2231 during the 89th Texas Legislative Session, all public colleges and universities in Texas are required to waive admission application fees for Texas residents who apply through ApplyTexas to undergraduate programs.

We are making it easier for Texans to continue their education by removing financial barriers to applying for college and helping more high school students take the next step toward earning a credential and joining the workforce that powers the world's 8th largest economy.

Thanks to your collaboration, our colleges and universities received 263,891 submitted applications during Texas's first Free College Application Week in 2025. That represents significant savings for Texas families and helped thousands of students begin their journey toward higher education. I sincerely appreciate your efforts as we continue to find ways to support the students and future workforce of our state.

Enclosed you will find a communications toolkit stocked with a sample press release, talking points, FAQ copy, and social media ideas. We will also share graphics that you may modify for your communications and outreach. Please reach out to us if you require additional resources.

Once again, thank you for your participation and support.

Best regards,

Wynn Rosser, PhD
Commissioner of Higher Education

Free College Application Week

This event provides Texas students with an opportunity to take an important step toward their postsecondary goals by applying to participating public colleges and universities at no cost. This toolkit is designed to help high school counselors, advisors, educators, and additional support groups implement successful Free College Application Week activities that guide students through the college application process.

Whether your campus is participating in Free College Application Week for the first time or building on previous efforts, you can use this toolkit's practical strategies, planning resources, and engagement ideas to help create a supportive and organized application experience.

Who This Toolkit Is For

This toolkit is intended for the following audiences:



- High school counselors
- College and career advisors
- Campus administrators
- Educators supporting college readiness initiatives
- Community-based organizations and college access partners



How This Toolkit Is Organized

The toolkit is organized sequentially to guide campuses through each stage of Free College Application Week implementation:



- Understanding the week's goals and tasks
- Preparing for Free College Application Week
- Engaging with students, families, and staff
- Promoting the week across the campus community
- Supporting students during the application week
- Following up after the week concludes to ensure students complete their financial aid applications and enroll in school

Throughout the toolkit, you will find planning tips, resources to implement, activities, communication ideas, and examples that can be adapted to fit your campus' needs.

Adapting the Toolkit for Your Campus

Every campus has different staffing structures, student populations, and available resources. This toolkit's recommendations are flexible and scalable. Adapt activities, timelines, and strategies to your campus' goals, capacity, and student needs. Use this toolkit alongside guidance and resources provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA).



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SECTION I

Introducing Free College Application Week



Free College Application Week Background

Free College Application Week is a statewide initiative that helps Texas residents apply to public colleges at no cost. The initiative was set by SB2231 during the 89th Texas Legislative session, which states that all public colleges and universities in Texas are required to waive the application fees for Texas residents who apply through ApplyTexas to undergraduate programs during this week. Texas public institutions must participate in Free College Application Week.

Dates and Times

Free College Application Week happens during the second full week of October, from Monday to Sunday. Students need to submit their applications through ApplyTexas by 11:59 p.m. (CDT) on Sunday to qualify. Applications that are in progress but not submitted are not eligible for waived fees from that week.

Eligibility

Students who are first-time college students or transfer students and meet [Texas residency requirements](#) are eligible. They must apply for undergraduate admission at Texas public institutions. Non-Texas residents and students applying for graduate or professional degree programs are not eligible for the Free College Application Week waived fees.



Purpose

Free College Application Week provides students with additional postsecondary options. Some of the benefits of the process include the following:

- Students receive more admission options.
- Students save money on application fees.
- Students meet priority deadlines for institutions, giving them access to additional scholarships and programs.
- Institutions of higher education increase their enrollment.

Success Spotlight

Free College Application Week meant my students applied to more schools, including a few they probably wouldn't have tried otherwise. They also found scholarships and other funding they never would have known about if applying hadn't been free.

- Advisor, Hutto High School



In addition to helping students, Free College Application Week is also an opportunity for school counselors and advisors to support intentional application submission while strengthening college-going awareness across campus. Although the initiative provides Texas students with the chance to apply to participating public institutions without application fees, students should focus on exploring their options and making informed decisions to successfully navigate the postsecondary planning process.

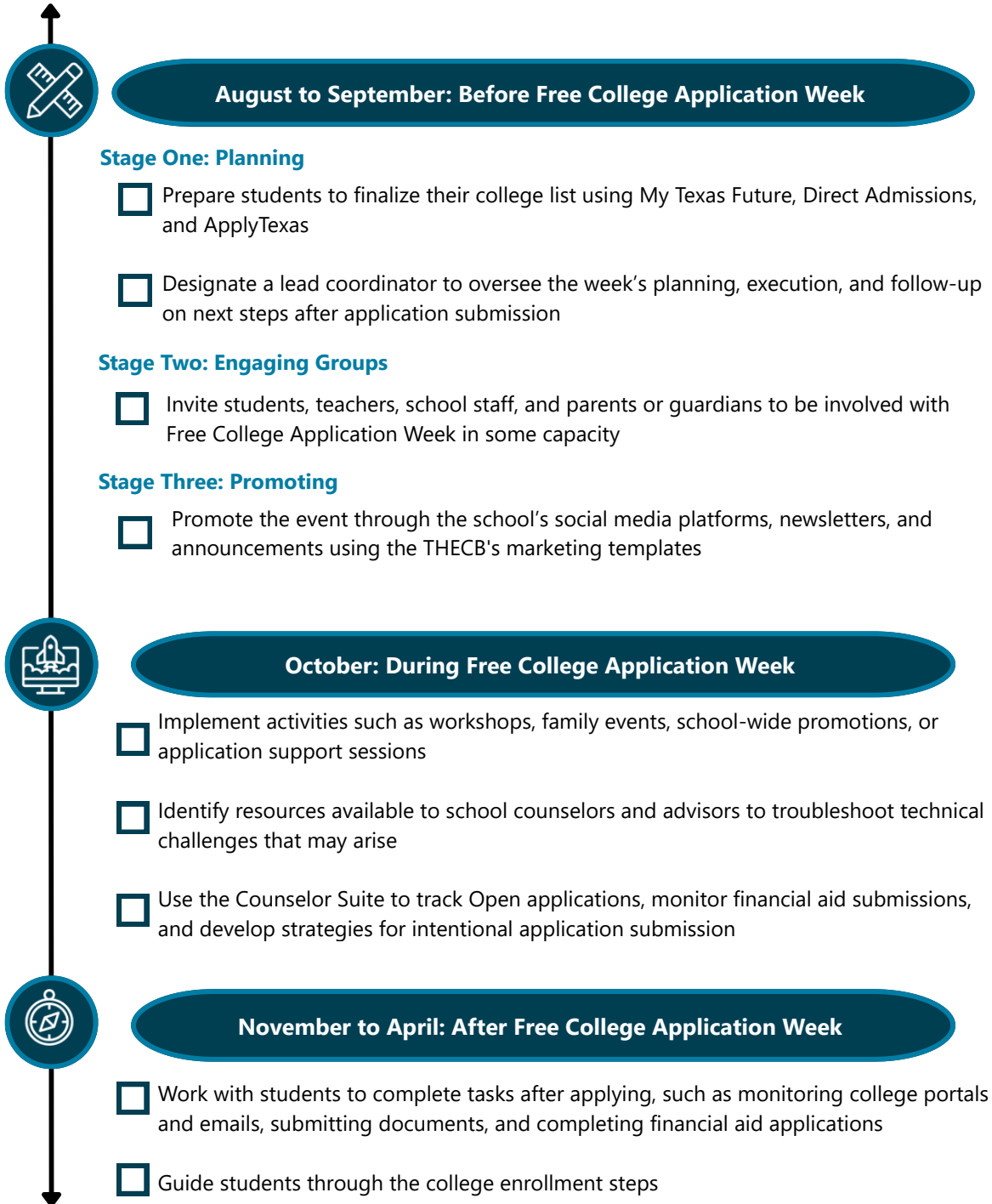
During the 2025 Free College Application Week, students submitted 263,891 applications through ApplyTexas. That's a 495% increase in applications submitted during the same week of the previous year. Free College Application Week has also helped families save millions of dollars on application fees.





Timeline

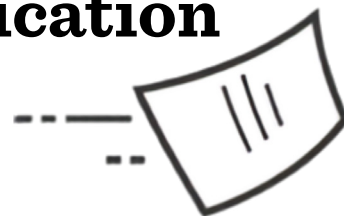
Consider the following timeline to prepare for and complete action steps for Free College Application Week:





SECTION II

Preparing for Free College Application Week



In this section, school counselors and advisors will review and identify strategies to incorporate when planning for Free College Application Week. Setting the foundation early can lead students to make more informed choices when submitting applications and meeting deadlines.

Stage One: Planning

During this stage, you and your team will plan for Free College Application Week. The section will focus on designating a coordinator to lead Free College Application Week who will get students ready early, help them finalize college lists, and prepare them for application submission.

Leading Free College Application Week

Designating a lead coordinator to plan, execute, and follow up with important steps can simplify the process. In addition, staff will know who to communicate with on anything related to Free College Application Week. The lead coordinator can be the on-campus school counselor, a partner from a community-based organization, or a school staff member who enjoys organizing events.

To begin, select a lead coordinator and have them create a team to manage the week's activities. Then ask your lead coordinator and their team to do the following:

- ☐ Recruit volunteers from your campus or students' families, or ask external partners for support
- ☐ Create checkpoints to ensure high school seniors are using My Texas Future and ApplyTexas

Before Free College Application Week, identify the tasks your lead coordinator will need to do, including the following:

- ☐ Building a campus support team
- ☐ Confirming student college lists
- ☐ Ensuring students have My Texas Future and ApplyTexas accounts
- ☐ Scheduling Free College Application Week activities or workshops
- ☐ Coordinating promotion and communication
- ☐ Identifying volunteers or external partners



Preparing Students Early

School counselors and advisors will work with students to have their college lists solidified by the time Free College Application Week begins. They will advise students to use My Texas Future as a resource to complete the following:

- ☐ Research careers and programs through the [Career Quizzes](#) and [Career Explorer search tool](#)
- ☐ Evaluate postsecondary options through the [Program Explorer](#), to build their college list, focusing on academic, financial, and social fit
- ☐ Calculate the costs of different schools by using the [Compare college costs search tool](#)

School Recognition

For the 2025-2026 Academic Year, the THECB recognized three schools for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to using My Texas Future for student planning. They are the following:



Tornillo High School, in Tornillo ISD

Copperas Cove High School, in Copperas Cove ISD

Jose J. Alderete Middle School, in Canutillo ISD

Finalizing College Lists

Students should continue researching and finalizing their college lists. If they haven't already, they can use Direct Admissions to get college admission offers based on their academic information. You can find more information in the [Direct Admissions Module](#) from the Texas OnCourse Academy.

By motivating your students to review their options carefully, you can help ensure they submit applications intentionally rather than in bulk to institutions they are not as invested in.

Guide your students to do the following:

- ☐ Research their Direct Admissions offers and confirm which schools have the major or program, recreational activities, resources, and financial aid they need
- ☐ Communicate with admission counselors to learn more about the institutions and demonstrate interest
- ☐ Meet with you to discuss their finalized college list
- ☐ Speak with their families about their college choices



Preparing for Application Submission

Early preparation can help reduce stress and allow students to focus on completing applications during Free College Application Week events.



Before the week begins, students should know how to use ApplyTexas efficiently. Encourage them to do the following ahead of time:

- ☐ Create and verify their ApplyTexas account, or sync their ApplyTexas account with their existing My Texas Future account
- ☐ Add all their schools from their finalized college list
- ☐ Gather materials such as resumes, essays, transcripts, and [application information](#)
- ☐ Review application requirements and deadlines
- ☐ Identify colleges participating in Free College Application Week
- ☐ Practice navigating the application platform before the submission week

We recommend that your students ask a school counselor, an advisor, or a trusted adult to review their application for accuracy before submission. For additional information on how students can create an ApplyTexas account and how to answer the Core Questions and school-specific questions, visit the [ApplyTexas Module](#) from the Texas OnCourse Academy.



Counselor Recommendation in Action

Students that qualify for fee waivers do not have to wait until Free College Application Week to submit applications.



Stage Two: Engaging Groups

During this stage, you and your team will focus on engagement for Free College Application Week. Fostering collaboration and building understanding around the week can create investment across the campus. Including different groups such as students, families, and school staff demonstrates that everyone has a role in making Free College Application Week a success for high school seniors. Consider how each of the following groups can provide support:

Students

By serving as leaders and advocates on their campus, students can increase awareness, encourage peer participation, and build ownership of Free College Application Week.

Encourage students to get involved in the following ways:

- Joining the planning committee
- Assisting with promoting Free College Application Week around school
- Volunteering at campus events and application activities

Teachers

Students spend the majority of the day with teachers, establishing connections and trust with them. Because of this, teachers can play an important role in supporting Free College Application Week preparation.

Have teachers participate by doing the following:

- Integrating college and career readiness conversations
- Incorporating My Texas Future resources in the classroom
- Sharing their own postsecondary experiences
- Emphasizing the importance of Free College Application Week during classes, including posting flyers in their classroom



Counselor Recommendation in Action

Work with senior-level teachers to assist their students with completing applications during class time, advisory, or other additional time built in during or after school.



School Staff and Administration

Some students, like those in ESL instruction and special education, have support systems that regularly connect with them. However, school staff and administrators can impact all students on campus, regardless of their existing support systems, by sharing opportunities for everyone to participate in and assist with Free College Application Week.

School staff and administrators can get students involved in the following ways:

- Encouraging seniors to apply during Free College Application Week
- Encouraging other students to offer support by volunteering at campus events and application activities
- Implementing college-awareness activities during advisory or homeroom
- Promoting Free College Application Week across the campus by posting flyers on bulletin boards or in hallways

Families

Parents and guardians play pivotal roles in students' postsecondary journeys. Families can build awareness and understanding of postsecondary education, including the college application and financial aid process. They can also encourage students to review all their options to make the right decisions for their future.

Families can get involved by doing the following:

- Asking the students about their postsecondary plans and goals
- Learning how they can support students throughout the application cycle
- Understanding application timelines and requirements
- Participating in informational events

Stage Three: Promoting

During this stage, school counselors and advisors will focus on how to promote Free College Application Week. We recommend utilizing the THECB'S promotional items, which include flyers, social media templates, and newsletter templates. In addition, consider how and where you can share the following information:

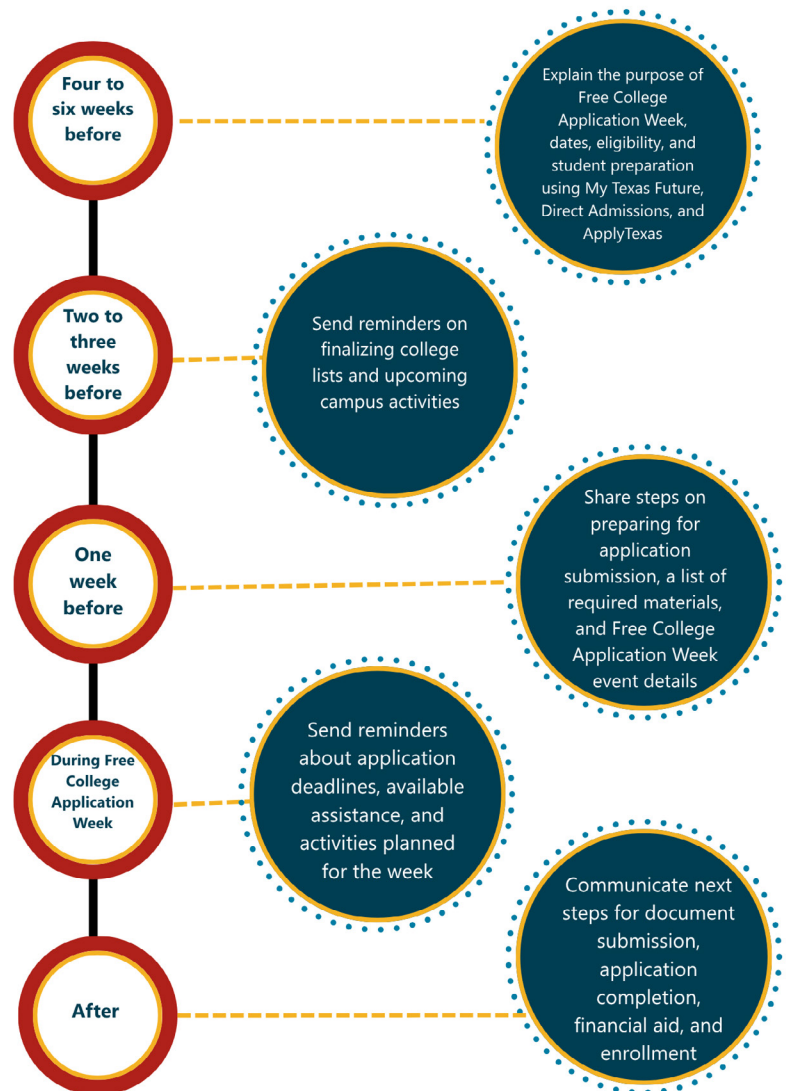
1. Announcements

- Ask school staff or students to share information during morning or afternoon announcements, homeroom, advisory sessions, or lunch

2. Social Media and digital platforms

- Coordinate with the campus social media manager, communications team, or designated staff member to develop a posting schedule using the provided promotional materials
- Consider sharing content through the following:
 - School social media accounts
 - Campus and district websites
 - Student and family communication platforms
 - Digital signage and campus monitors
- Ask students, teachers, counselors, and campus organizations to amplify messaging by sharing school-approved posts through existing communication channels, encouraging peer participation, and reminding students about upcoming activities and deadlines

Create a posting schedule, or utilize the following schedule:

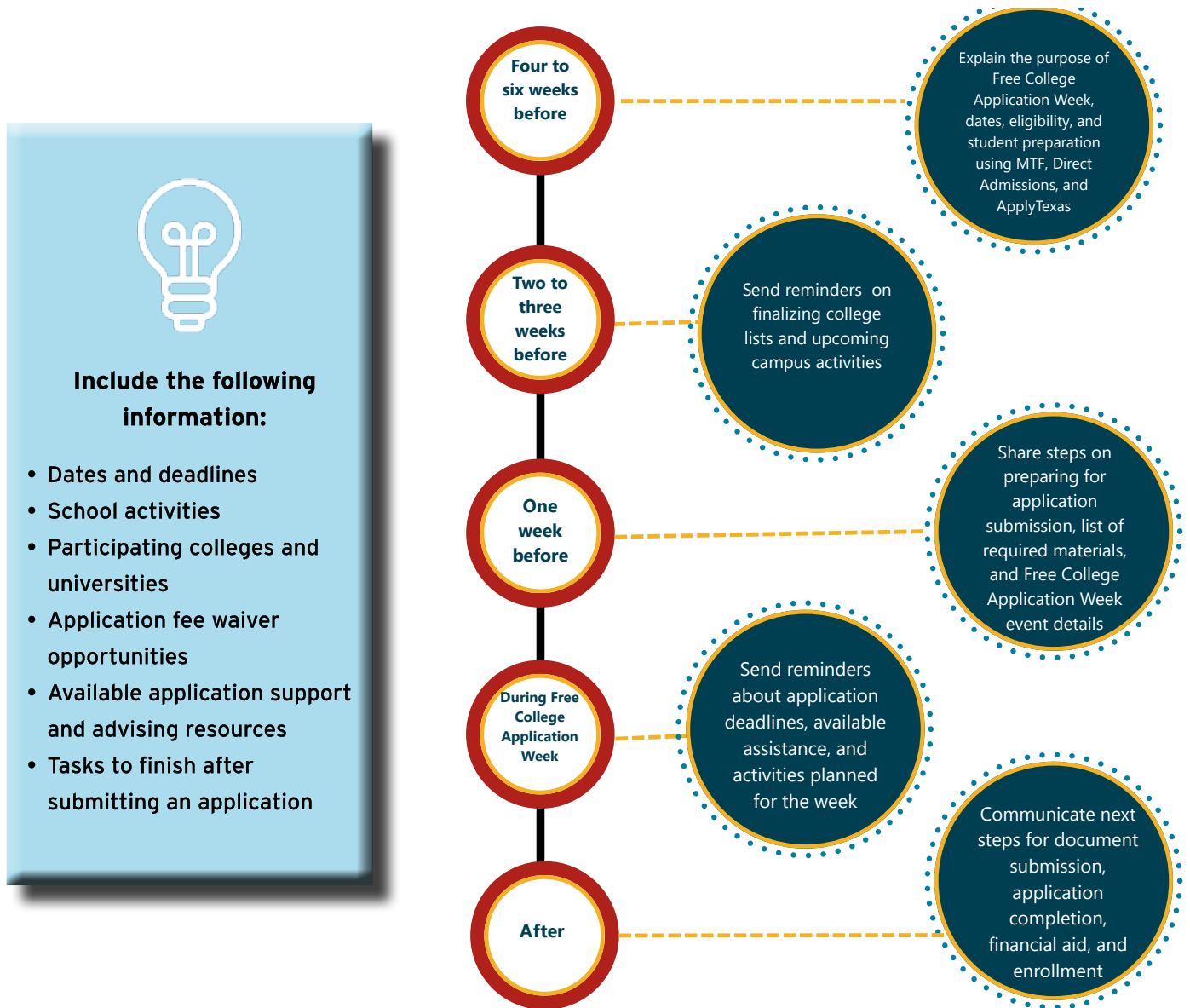


Counselor Recommendation in Action

Market Free College Application Week and planned activities on social media and in school newsletters during September.

3. Newsletters

- Make sure that teachers and administration have the most up-to-date email addresses from parents and guardians so students and families can receive consistent, timely information about Free College Application Week
- Message students, parents, guardians, and community partners
- Follow the above posting schedule and incorporate student milestones into your messaging



Note: Reference the Appendix to find all the THECB's promotional materials to support this stage of the process.



Additional Promotion Ideas

Depending on your campus' capacity, you can include additional promotion through the following methods:

- **Local press**
 - Ask a local news channel, radio station, or podcast to highlight that Free College Application Week is happening on your campus; this can be another way to remind students and families about the event
- **Local businesses**
 - Coordinate a school fundraising night with a local restaurant or cafe, where a certain percentage of proceeds go toward application event supplies or other needed items
- **Printed announcements**
 - Send home materials during family nights, open houses, or other school events about Free College Application Week

Success Spotlight

I was especially excited about Free College Application Week because many of my students come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and struggle to afford application fees. This opportunity allowed them to apply to larger Texas universities without the added stress of financial barriers, giving them access to pursue their top college choices.

-Lead counselor, Irving ISD





SECTION III

Free College Application Week

In this section, school counselors and advisors should focus on two primary goals: supporting intentional application submission for seniors and building postsecondary awareness and preparation across all grade levels. The activities and strategies in this section are designed to help campuses advance these goals.



Supporting Senior Application Submission

Preparing Seniors During the Week

The goal is for all seniors to have a plan for Free College Application Week. However, if a student begins their exploration and preparation process this week, that's fine. Consider the following recommendations on how to guide seniors with preparation and lead them to application submission:

- Encourage students to submit applications intentionally
 - Promote My Texas Future to students so they can research colleges and careers and narrow their application focus
 - Use Direct Admissions offers to show students their realistic options based on their academic information
 - Check in with students about their college list and make sure that their schools are a strong fit for their academic, career, community, financial, and social goals

When students finalize their college list and confirm that the schools on it align with their goals, they will have a higher chance of enrolling at that college or university. This, in turn, helps institutions of higher education in the following two ways:

1. Admission counselors will have a greater chance of connecting with students and helping them decide whether this school is right for them. They can speak with students in person or virtually about the resources available and what campus life is like.

2. Ensuring that students only apply to schools they have a genuine interest in reduces the number of applications colleges and universities receive, preventing their staff from working on applications from students who are unlikely to accept admission offers.



Supporting Efficient Submission

During Free College Application Week, many tasks are happening simultaneously, including tracking student progress and application submissions and making last-minute preparations. To ensure that processes run smoothly throughout the week, consider implementing the following strategies:

- Motivate students to submit applications early
 - Remember that school counselors and advisors from all over the state will work with students to submit applications during the second week of October
 - Avoid last-minute technical difficulties by leading students to submit their applications early and guarantee that they arrive at the institutions on time
 - Keep students moving toward their post-application submission steps, including creating college portals, submitting missing documents, and starting financial aid applications
- Use the Counselor Suite to guide application completion and drive awareness of postsecondary opportunities
 - Download reports and filter information such as applications to a specific college or university, financial aid completion, Open applications, or applications with priority deadlines
 - Track which colleges and universities students apply to, and highlight these schools for students in 9th through 11th grades to increase their exposure to these institutions





Addressing Challenges During Free College Application Week

Challenges may arise during the week. To reduce stress and uncertainty, utilize the following resources to troubleshoot and find answers to questions:

- [Free College Application Week Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#): Find information and answers in the THECB's Free College Application Week FAQ.
- [ApplyTexas FAQ](#) and [Counselor Suite FAQ](#): These FAQs cover questions on selecting application types, applying for scholarships, accessing reports, and more related topics.
- [ApplyTexas Help Desk](#): A service representative at this help desk can assist with ApplyTexas, technical, and non-technical questions not answered by the other FAQs. Submit a ticket by accessing the [Contact Us link](#). For multiple issues, please submit one issue per ticket; multiple issues listed on one ticket will delay the response time.
- [ApplyTexas Training Materials](#): The THECB website offers ApplyTexas training materials. They include training videos, webinars, and documentation for the applicant and admin portal and updates about ApplyTexas and the Counselor Suite.
- Communication with institutions of higher education: A school's admissions office is the best point of contact for issues such as student portal access, missing documents, or student information updates.





Engaging with Students Across Grade Levels

Free College Application Week should focus on completing application submissions as well as building early postsecondary awareness and preparation. By engaging with students from all grade levels, you can demonstrate how preparation leads to a smoother and more informed college application process. In addition, students have more motivation when they see their peers engaged in the same work.

Workshops for Grade-Level Engagement

Facilitate lessons on college readiness for grades 9th through 12th using these topics:

9th grade: Exploration and interests

- Interest and Skills Quizzes
- Academic planning
- School and community involvement

10th grade: Planning and preparation

- Career Explorer
- Resume drafting
- Leadership development

12th grade: Application submission and transition planning

- College list finalization
- ApplyTexas walkthrough
- Financial aid options and scholarships

11th grade: College readiness and application preparation

- Postsecondary option research
- Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID creation
- Test prep
- Essay writing



Counselor Recommendation in Action

Host application workshops during lunchtime the week of Free College Application Week.

Reference the [My Texas Future High School Counselor and Advisor Toolkit](#) and [My Texas Future - Secondary Module](#) from the Texas OnCourse Academy to find activities, lessons, and resources for these workshops.



Building Campus-Wide Awareness and Participation

Campuses may choose to incorporate activities that increase visibility and spark interest in postsecondary opportunities during Free College Application Week. These activities should support awareness, preparation, and engagement across grade levels. Some ideas may include:

Free College Application Week pep rally: Boost overall morale and get students excited and confident about applying

Family night: Increase awareness of college readiness requirements

Financial aid workshops: Help students and families understand college costs and complete financial aid applications

Student recognition activities: Show appreciation to students for their application readiness and efforts





SECTION IV

Next Steps After Free College Application Week



In this section, school counselors and advisors will focus on supporting students after Free College Application Week to help them complete the admission and financial aid process. Students will need continued guidance as they monitor college portals, submit missing requirements, complete financial aid applications, and review communications from institutions. This section highlights strategies and resources that can help students stay organized and complete admission requirements.

Helping Students Monitor and Complete Applications

Inform your students that a submitted application does not mean the application is complete. Students may miss the steps they need to take after submission, as they have already added a lot of information about themselves to their application. To support application completion, consider organizing an assembly for seniors or a workshop during homeroom or advisory class. It may be easier to go around an auditorium or classroom to answer student questions than it would be to follow up with students individually.

Work with students to complete the following tasks:

- Review their email inboxes
- Help them delete or move read or low-priority emails
- Get them to check for college portal activation links
- Guide them to set up their accounts
- Remind them to save their log-in information
- Help them submit any documents missing from their admission application

Most institutions will require the following items for their applications:

- High school transcript
- College transcript, if applicable
- Test scores, if applicable
- Resume, if applicable
- Letters of recommendation, if applicable
- Supplemental materials, depending on the major or program selected

Information to Consider

Students who submitted applications during Free College Application Week but were ineligible for the fee waivers should visit the institution's website to confirm whether other application waiver options are available.



Supporting Financial Aid Application Completion

Once students complete their applications, they need to apply for financial aid. Completing financial aid applications early and accurately may help students meet priority deadlines for institutional and external scholarships. Remind students and families about the following:

- **House Bill 3 Graduation Requirement:** For seniors to graduate, they need to complete a financial aid application. If a parent or guardian does not want the student to complete an application, they must complete the opt-out form.
- **FAFSA, TASFA, and CSS Profile:** Institutions may accept financial aid applications from FAFSA, TASFA, and/or CSS Profile. Students should reference each college's financial aid website to see which application they need to complete.
- **Texas Leadership Scholars (TLS):** This statewide program was founded by 18 member institutions to guide Texas high school graduates to develop their leadership skills and continue their education at a public Texas university. Visit the [Texas Leadership Scholars website](#) to learn more about the program and how their funding works.
- **Scholarships:** Students should research and apply for scholarships they qualify for. Notify students that they should search for city, local, and national scholarships based on their academics, extracurricular activities, and background information.

Students can explore the following scholarship databases:



[BigFuture Scholarships by College Board](#)



[College Board Scholarship Search](#)



[Kaleidoscope](#)



[Scholarship America](#)



[Unigo](#)



Continuing Postsecondary Planning Conversations

Submitting college and financial aid applications are essential steps. However, students still need to evaluate their options and begin the enrollment process after completing their applications. Encourage them to revisit My Texas Future to learn more about the enrollment process. They can access the Apply for college tab and locate the [Finish your applications section](#) to find the following:

- Additional items students need to submit after applying
- After you're admitted, which includes housing and enrollment steps
- Pros and cons of each housing option

Also motivate students to read through the Pay for college tab, which covers the following topics:

- [College Costs and Savings](#)
- [Explore Financial Aid](#)
- [Compare types of aid](#)
- [Apply for scholarships](#)

Incorporating these resources into continuing conversations about enrollment can help students make informed decisions about their postsecondary options, find what is best for their family, and prepare for the transition from high school to college. By gradually shifting responsibility to students, school counselors and advisors can help them develop their independence and the decision-making skills needed for success after high school graduation.





Appendix

The following resources are provided to help with planning and implementation of Free College Application Week.

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Appendix A.1

Professional Learning Resources

Review these free professional learning resources to strengthen your college advising knowledge and better support students before, during, and after Free College Application Week.

College Application Resources

- [ApplyTexas Training Materials](#): Counselors and advisors can explore training videos, webinars, updates, and more.
- [ApplyTexas FAQ](#): Students can find guidance on using ApplyTexas and locating scholarships.
- [Counselor Suite FAQ](#): School counselors and advisors can find answers on accessing student college applications and getting help with ApplyTexas and the Counselor Suite.

College and Career Planning Resources

- [Direct Admissions Toolkit](#): Helps educators understand what Direct Admissions is, its benefits, and how to introduce it to students
- [My Texas Future - High School Counselor and Advisor Toolkit](#): Provides detailed activities for grade level 9th to 12th to support college readiness





Financial Aid Resources

- **[Financial Aid Toolkit](#)**: Find detailed information on support systems, student data tracking, training, and hands-on guidance
- **[BigFuture Scholarships by College Board](#)**: Explore scholarship drawings provided by College Board, where students complete college readiness steps from preparation to enrollment
- **[College Board Scholarship Search](#)**: Browse College Board's scholarship database
- **[Kaleidoscope](#)**: Check out this scholarship database, which connects students with scholarships they're eligible for
- **[Scholarship America](#)**: Search this scholarship database, which aims to eliminate financial barriers for students
- **[Unigo](#)**: View this scholarship database, which provides scholarships for high school and college students

Professional Learning Resources

Learn more in these Texas OnCourse Academy modules

- **[ApplyTexas](#)**: Explores ApplyTexas, using student data to guide application completion and how Direct Admissions and Free College Application Week connects altogether
- **[Direct Admissions](#)**: Includes the purpose of Direct Admissions, using student data to generate matches, and how My Texas Future and ApplyTexas works with Direct Admissions
- **[High School Advising: Financial Aid and Literacy](#)**: Covers FAFSA, TASFA, state aid, scholarships and financing postsecondary education and training
- **[My Texas Future-Secondary](#)**: Provides detail information about the online platform and how to integrate it on your high school campus

[Professional Learning Series Webinars](#): Features webinars with the most up-to-date information on changes to platforms and advising strategies

[Texas OnCourse Newsletter](#): Includes once-a-month information for counselors, advisors, and other educators supporting students in college and career decisions



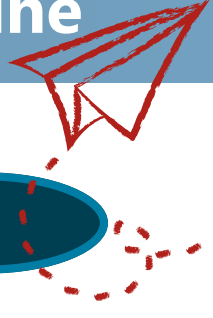
Appendix A.2

Free College Application Week Timeline

Use this timeline to plan key tasks before, during, and after Free College Application Week. Following this timeline can help ensure a successful event and smooth experience for students.



Free College Application Week Timeline



August to September: Before Free College Application Week

Stage One: Planning

- ☐ Prepare students to finalize their college list using My Texas Future, Direct Admissions, and ApplyTexas
- ☐ Designate a lead coordinator to oversee the week's planning, execution, and follow-up on next steps after application submission

Stage Two: Engaging Groups

- ☐ Invite students, teachers, school staff, and parents or guardians to be involved with Free College Application Week in some capacity

Stage Three: Promoting

- ☐ Promote the event through the school's social media platforms, newsletters, and announcements using the THECB's marketing templates

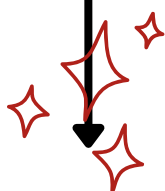


October: During Free College Application Week

- ☐ Implement activities such as workshops, family events, school-wide promotions, or application support sessions
- ☐ Identify resources available to school counselors and advisors to troubleshoot technical challenges that may arise
- ☐ Use the Counselor Suite to track Open applications, monitor financial aid submissions, and develop strategies for intentional application submission



November to April: After Free College Application Week

- ☐ Work with students to complete tasks after applying, such as monitoring college portals and emails, submitting documents, and completing financial aid applications
 - ☐ Guide students through the college enrollment steps
- 



Appendix A.3

ApplyTexas Student Planning Worksheet

Ask students to complete this worksheet before they start applications in order to gather information they will need to answer the Core required questions on ApplyTexas.

APPLY TEXAS



Core Questions: Student Planning Worksheet



Before you start your ApplyTexas application, use this worksheet to gather your information. Completing this first will help you save time and avoid mistakes.

Section 1: About you

You will need to add your basic personal, contact, and background information.

Fill in your information:

Legal first name: _____

Legal last name: _____

Preferred name (if different): _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Home address: _____

Gender: _____ Ethnicity/Race: _____

Military status (if applicable): _____

Foster care experience (if applicable): _____ Primary language: _____

Have the following ready (check when complete):

☐ Birth certificate

☐ Military documents (if applicable)

☐ Social Security number

Helpful tip:

Use your legal name exactly as it appears on official documents.



Section 2: Household

You will need to add information about your parent(s), guardian(s), and household.

Fill in your information:

Parent/Guardian name: _____

Additional parent/guardian 2 name (if applicable): _____

Emergency contact name: _____

Emergency contact phone: _____

Texas residency status: _____ Do you help support your family financially? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain briefly: _____

Have the following ready (check when complete):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Proof of residency | ☐ Your tax records (if applicable) |
| ☐ Parent/Guardian citizenship documents (if applicable) | ☐ Parent/Guardian tax records |

Helpful tip:

If you are unsure about residency or tax information, ask a trusted adult early.



Section 3: Education and testing

You will need to add your academic history and test scores.

Fill in your information:

High school name: _____

Graduation date (month/year): _____ Have you attended college before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list college(s): _____

Certifications (if any): _____

College entrance exams taken: ☐ SAT ☐ ACT ☐ Other: _____ Highest scores: _____

Have the following ready (check when complete):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ High school transcript | ☐ GED or equivalency certificate (if applicable) |
| ☐ College transcript (if applicable) | ☐ Test score reports |

Helpful tip:

Report your scores exactly as they appear on official reports through your College Board or ACT account.



Section 4: Activities and achievements

You will need to add information about your involvement outside the classroom.

Extracurricular activities (examples: clubs, sports, or organizations):	
Volunteer experience:	
Awards and honors:	
Employment (if applicable):	

Have the following ready (check when complete):

- ☐ Resume (if you have one)
- ☐ List of awards and honors
- ☐ List of activities, volunteering, paid work, or unpaid work

Helpful tip:

Include leadership roles, responsibilities, and how long you participated. Do not forget that family responsibilities also count!



Final Check

Before you start ApplyTexas, make sure you have:

- ☐ Completed all sections in this worksheet
- ☐ Gathered all required documents
- ☐ Reviewed your information for accuracy

You are ready to begin your application. Take your time and double-check your answers.



Appendix B

Communication and Promotion Resources

Use these social media templates, messages, and materials to promote Free College Application Week on your campus.

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 - B.1 Free College Application Week Social Media Graphics25
 - B.2 Free College Application Week one-pager27
 - B.3 Free College Application Week press release29



Appendix B.1

Social Media Graphics

Use these social media graphics to promote Free College Application Week using your campus' social media platforms. You can use the following links to download the graphics.

[Free College Application Week Social Media Graphic 1](#)

[Free College Application Week Social Media Graphic 2](#)



FREE

**COLLEGE
APPLICATION**



WEEK

October 12-18, 2026

THECB

Texas Higher Education
COORDINATING BOARD

TEXAS FREE COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK

- First-Time, Returning, Visiting and Transfer Applicants
- All Texas Colleges and Public Universities



ONE WEEK ZERO APPLICATION FEES



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Appendix B.2

Free College Application Week one-pagers

Use these one-pagers to share through newsletters about Free College Application Week. You can use the following links to download the one-pagers.

[Free College Application Week One-pager Version 1](#)

[Free College Application Week One-pager Version 2](#)

[Free College Application Week One-pager Version 3](#)



ONE WEEK ZERO APPLICATION FEES

**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD

**APPLY to Texas public
colleges and universities
– FOR FREE!**

October 12-18, 2026 

WHAT is Free College Application Week?

Free College Application Week provides an annual opportunity for Texas residents to apply for undergraduate admission to any Texas public college or university - without having to pay any application fees.

WHEN is it?

Free College Application Week is Monday, October 12 through Sunday, October 18, 2026.

WHAT are the requirements?

Applicants must use [ApplyTexas \(www.applytexas.org\)](http://www.applytexas.org), Texas' online portal for applying to any Texas public university or 2-year college.

Applications submitted through other platforms may not qualify for the fee waiver.

Applications must be finally submitted within ApplyTexas by 11:59 p.m. CST on Sunday, October 18, to qualify. Applications that are started but not submitted will not be eligible, so access ApplyTexas early!

WHO can participate?

Texas residents applying for undergraduate admission at Texas public institutions may participate. This includes first-time, returning, visiting, and transfer students. The fee waiver does not apply to individuals who do not meet Texas residency requirements. It is not available to those applying to graduate or professional degree programs.

Need more information? Visit www.highered.texas.gov/free-college-application-week/ for Frequently Asked Questions and additional resources.



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Appendix B.3

Free College Application Week press release

Use this press release to promote Free College Application Week and why it is beneficial for students and families.

Texas Students Can Apply to Public Colleges and Universities for Free During One Week this October

Texas students applying to an in-state public college or university can save hundreds of dollars in application fees by applying during Free College Application Week, Oct. 12–18, 2026.

Created by Senate Bill 2231 during the 89th Texas Legislature, Free College Application Week helps reduce the cost of applying to college for eligible Texas residents. All the state's public two- and four-year colleges participate in this annual event.

This is the second year for [Free College Application Week](#) and it has already been a huge success. Last year, Texas's colleges and universities received almost 264,000 applications during this week when application fees were waived.

Applications must be submitted through [ApplyTexas](#); so, it is important for students to create an ApplyTexas account. Applications that are submitted between 12 a.m. CDT on October 12, 2026, through 11:59 p.m. CDT on October 18, 2026, through ApplyTexas will be free. To be eligible, applicants must be Texas residents applying as first-time college students, returning students, visiting students, or transfer students. (For details on residency status, see the [Texas Residency Guidelines](#).)

Free College Application Week is the latest addition to a suite of online tools that the state offers Texans to help them navigate the college admission process. These include:

- [My Texas Future](#), a website created by the state that helps students explore careers, discover education and training programs that match their interests and skills, and learn about ways to pay for school. Students can start building their profiles in middle school as early as age 13, making the application process easier.
- [ApplyTexas](#), an online tool for applying to Texas public universities or community colleges as well as some private universities. ApplyTexas supports applications from first-time college students, returning students, visiting students, transfer students, and graduate applicants. There's an application guide that can help you know all the documents and resume items you'll need.
- [Direct Admissions](#), a new feature of My Texas Future, further streamlines the college application process. By entering basic information like GPA, class rank, and test

scores, students instantly receive a personalized list of Texas public universities where they could qualify for admission—before even starting the application.

STUDENTS: GET READY, GET SET, SAVE MONEY

Whether you are a high school student navigating Texas public universities and colleges for the first time, or a working adult seeking to advance your career through education, the state offers this powerful set of online tools to assist you in planning your educational and career journey. Best of all, eligible students can submit applications to participating Texas public colleges and universities without paying application fees during Free College Application Week.

So, mark your calendars, explore your options, create a profile, and take advantage of these digital resources!

Free College Application Week kicks off in October. Your Future Starts Today.

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