



EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Whether it's a financial aid event, parent night or college fair, there are several things you can do to encourage student and parent participation when planning a college access event. Visit the second page for ideas specific to different types of events! Host these as stand-alone nights or consider combining a few or coordinating with Parent/Teacher Conferences or other events that will already be bringing families to campus.

LOGISTICS: NAIL IT DOWN

- ☐ **Set the date.** Before you choose your date, think about the ages of students and families who will attend. Avoid potential conflicts with sporting events, concerts and other community events. It's best to avoid the day before and after a holiday, as well as Mondays and Fridays. Also, if you want parent participation, opt for evenings or weekends.
- ☐ **Expand your team.** Partner with other organizations or sponsors who share your goals and can provide support. They may be able to contribute money, volunteers or in-kind donations like refreshments. Consider listing them as a sponsor in your promotional materials or allowing them to distribute freebies or brochures at your event. Ask your teachers if they'd be willing to offer a few extra points to students who attend and bring back a signed brochure or handout from the event.
- ☐ **Gather giveaways or prizes.** Consider providing coupons to a local restaurant, tickets to school sporting events or other small freebies to encourage students and families to attend!

PROMOTION: GET THE WORD OUT

- ☐ **Create promotional materials.** Print posters and flyers to hang in the halls or send home with students.
- ☐ **Promote early and often.** Send save-the-date notices, post bulletin board flyers, distribute flyers and advertise on the school's website. Share reminders through social media, email blasts, mobile apps, etc. Have students chalk the sidewalks!
- ☐ **Feed them.** Providing a meal or refreshments is a great way to encourage attendance and make your participants feel valued.

PLANNING CONTENT AND DELIVERY: GET READY

- ☐ **Ask for help.** Ask local campuses for volunteers. Many teachers and professors require (or offer extra credit for) community service, and your event may serve as the perfect volunteer opportunity. Consider offering childcare for families with younger siblings.
- ☐ **Ask the experts.** Find presenters who offer free, relevant services. Contact colleges and universities to invite financial aid counselors to talk about the financial aid process. Oklahoma Money Matters and UCanGo2 will customize their presentations to fit your organization's individual needs. Visit OklahomaMoneyMatters.org or UCanGo2.org for more information; travel may be limited.
- ☐ **Prepare an agenda or schedule.** To keep everything running smoothly, you'll need to know in advance how everything will fit together. Prepare an agenda and share it with everyone who will be participating in the event. Print extra copies for volunteers who will be helping out that day.
- ☐ **Provide take-aways.** If you have informative materials or freebies, prepare them for the event. Make sure you give participants your contact information so they can reach you if they have questions later. Be sure online evaluation links or paper forms are available if you choose to use them.

FOLLOW UP

- ☐ **Review and reflect.** Plan a meeting with your team to discuss the event. Did you stay on budget? Should you have done something differently? Compile a list of recommendations to use as a reference for future events. If it's appropriate, consider asking volunteers and participants to complete an evaluation or comment card.

FINANCIAL AID EVENTS

- Senior students and families will be the focus for FAFSA, but you can have scholarship and financial aid info events for younger students and families as well.
- Families will need computer and internet access to complete the FAFSA online so consider hosting the event in a computer lab or a space with access to laptops.
- If they're creating StudentAid.gov accounts, they'll need to be able to access their personal email and/or text messages to receive confirmation codes. Be sure to host your event in a location that has good cell reception.
- Share UCanGo2's [Items Needed to Complete the FAFSA](#) with families ahead of time.
- Remind families submitting a FAFSA is a grad requirement (or they need to complete the opt-out form).
- **Have questions about financial aid events? Email UCanGo2@ocap.org.**

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT EVENTS

- Utilize your concurrent enrollment contacts from local colleges as your local experts. They may be able to present a parent session, host an information table or provide giveaways.
- If students are enrolling in concurrent classes, they will need computer and internet access.
- Provide links to or copies of the Concurrent Enrollment Overview documents for students and parents at OKhighered.org/Concurrent-Enrollment/.
- **Have questions about concurrent enrollment events? Email ConcurrentOK@osrhe.edu.**

PARENT & FAMILY EVENTS

- Consider hosting a parent event in conjunction with parent/teacher conferences or other school events.
- Topics will vary by grade level, but may include:
 - Middle School — what you need to know headed into high school
 - Freshman Orientation
 - Overview of graduation requirements
 - PreACT results
 - CareerTech
- **Have questions about college readiness resources for parent and family events? Email StudentPrep@osrhe.edu.**

OKLAHOMA'S PROMISE

- Remember students can apply in 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th or before December 31 of 12th grade so make sure you invite middle school parents.
- Your event might just be informational, sharing details of the program and how to apply.
- If you want families to complete the application, consider hosting the event in a computer lab or have access to laptops.
- Download flyers from the Oklahoma's Promise website to email ahead of time or print to hand out.
- Have the [Oklahoma's Promise FAQ](#) page handy to answer common questions.
- **Have questions about Oklahoma's Promise events? Email okpromise@osrhe.edu.**

Can't host a whole event? Consider setting up a table at an athletic or other school event when families will be on campus to promote Oklahoma's Promise, FAFSA completion, concurrent enrollment or other topics.

You can also find free college planning, financial aid and financial literacy resources at UCanGo2.org, OKcollegestart.org and OklahomaMoneyMatters.org.

