



Dear NC Countdown to College Site Coordinator:

On behalf of CFNC and CACRAO, thank you for hosting a NC Countdown to College event at your school! The goal of NC Countdown to College is to support high school seniors in completing three important college enrollment steps: residency, FAFSA, and applications.

While NC Countdown to College focuses especially 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. Involving all of your students in Countdown to College will add to the college-going culture at your high school.

Over the past years, NC Countdown to College has been a statewide effort, and we look forward to continuing this tradition across North Carolina. We have reduced this guide and enhanced the possible activities you might include during the month of October. We hope this assists you, whether this is your first year or you are seasoned!

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about planning and implementing the event at your site. Be sure to visit our website, NC Countdown to College, for up to date information about the event!

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

Sincerely,
NC Countdown to College Committee
C2C@northcarolina.edu



Planning Your Site or School for NC C2C

We intend for this to be a useful guide for Site Coordinators when planning and implementing an NC Countdown to College event. Additional resources and materials are available online at www.CFNC.org/C2C.

Step 1. Identify a Site Coordinator

Every school or organization participating in NC Countdown to College should identify a site coordinator or co-coordinators. This can be a counselor, advisor, coach or other professional who will be responsible for planning and implementing event(s) for your site. It is also recommended that you designate a back-up coordinator.

Step 2. Register Your Site

To participate in NC Countdown to College 2022 your school should register on CFNC.org/C2C in the “School” section. The registration can also be found here: <https://www.cfnc.org/apply-to-college/nc-countdown-to-college/c2c-site-registration/>

Why register?

- “I Applied” stickers
- Technology communication
- You will receive C2C and CAW updates from us, including any updates to the fee waiver list
- Timely emails from us between your registration and October, with updates, activities for students, etc.
- Data! We use the registration information to make improvements each year.

Step 3. Perform Technology Preparations

The success of your event could hinge on your technology readiness. Here are a list of preparations:

- Provide your IT staff with the Technology Guidelines. These are available on CFNC.org/C2C in the “Schools” section.
- Ensure your IT staff reviews the list of whitelisted websites.
- Work with technology support staff to ensure that firewalls or other access restrictions will not prevent students from accessing online applications the day of the event.

Step 4. Coordinate Your Site Team

- Bring together a planning committee to help plan month-long activities. This group may include faculty, staff, parents, students, and community members. Students could earn community service hours for volunteering.
- Survey students to find out what they want to know about education beyond high school and plan mini workshops around those topics.

- Contact your local campus-based admissions and financial aid office to help with your events.

Weekly Themes

Consider defining themes for each week of NC Countdown to College and scheduling activities related to those themes. We break up each week as follows: *Week 1: Imagine Your Future; Week 2: FAFSA and RDS Concentration; Week 3: College Application Week; and Week 4: I Applied, Now What?*

Activity Suggestions

We have activity suggestions below, listed by week. We have provided you with any resources needed, and each activity should take no more than 15 minutes. *Please note that many of these activities are also appropriate for grades 9-11, if you are interested in getting your whole school involved. The activity is noted with an asterisk if it can easily be used with younger students.*

Week 1:

- a) Be Prepared*: Ensure that students have a log-in for CFNC.org by either making an account for the first time or resetting their password (if needed). This can be done via your Pro Tools account. Pro Tools information: <https://www.cfnc.org/education-professionals/professional-center-and-professional-tools/>
- b) Understanding C2C: Have students review the student section of the C2C website, in order to understand the goal of the month and the three main components: FAFSA, RDS, and college admissions. <https://www.cfnc.org/apply-to-college/nc-countdown-to-college/for-students/>
- c) Career Assessments*: Have students complete an assessment on CFNC.org (i.e. Interest Profiler) and review career requirements. Students can then explore programs and majors at the colleges to ensure their plans are aligning. Assessments can be found here: <https://www2.cfnc.org/learnAboutYourself>
- d) Where are NC Schools?*: Have students review the NC College Map located here: <https://www.cfnc.org/media/r1dezlqk/nc-college-map-poster.pdf> Show students where they are located, as well as local and distant colleges. Emphasize how many different colleges we have in NC, as well as the different types. This is a pre-activity to the next one below.
- e) College Search on CFNC.org*: Have students utilize the College Search feature to plan and finalize where they will apply during College Application Week. Have them review admissions requirements and academics, to ensure the colleges they may apply to have their major or interest area. <https://www2.cfnc.org/college-search>
- f) Vision Board*: A vision board is a representation of our goals and dreams; what better way to prep for C2C and CAW! The board may be a collage of images, words, and phrases that capture college and career goals. Here is a link to show more information and visuals: <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/8-ideas-create-your-own-vision-board.html>
- g) Extra Activity for 9-11th Graders: Have students review the CFNC college planning guide and review specific information for each grade level: <https://www.cfnc.org/news/the-ultimate-college-planning-guide/> In addition, students can review the CFNC career planning guide here: <https://www.cfnc.org/news/the-ultimate-career-planning-guide-make-your-career-a-reality/>

Week 2:

- a) Why the FAFSA?*: Have students watch the video on filling out the FAFSA here: <https://youtu.be/LK0bbu0y5AM> Talk about why we do it and the importance of it. After they watch the video, have them review this page at CFNC: <https://www.cfnc.org/pay-for-college/apply-for-financial-aid/>
- b) Scholarship Search: Have students review the Scholarship Search section of CFNC, utilizing the search feature on the left side. Students should find at least one scholarship they are eligible for and plan to apply to. <https://www.cfnc.org/pay-for-college/scholarship-search/>
- c) Residency Determination Service (RDS): Students should review this video to understand RDS <https://youtu.be/kRcSHU-K Js> Make sure students know where to go to complete residency after watching the video: <https://ncresidency.cfnc.org/residencyInfo/> and where to find resources they may need: <https://ncresidency.cfnc.org/residencyInfo/resources>

Week 3:

- a) Who Would You Admit?*: Have students complete the admissions activity found on page 16 here: <https://www.cfnc.org/media/4rjh0mx5/student-activities-11th.pdf> This is a great activity that gives students a feel for the decisions admissions professionals make each day.
- b) Writing Your College Admissions Essay: Pass along this link on college admissions essays to give students tips on writing their essays: <https://www.cfnc.org/apply-to-college/college-application-resources/admissions-essay-tips/> Have students review the sample essay questions from colleges in NC and ask them to work on a sample essay at home. Review these as a group or in small groups as a short activity in their English classrooms or as a separate activity this week.
- c) Extra activity for grades 9-11*: Have students complete a sample application located here: <https://www.cfnc.org/apply-to-college/college-application-resources/practice-application/>

Week 4:

- a) Financial Aid Offer Letters: Once students complete their FAFSA and admissions application, they will receive offer letters from the financial aid offices. Have students prepare for these by reviewing pages 16 & 17 here: <https://www.cfnc.org/media/5v1fdxr1/student-activities-12th.pdf> After they have reviewed these two pages, head to this site for videos and sample offer letters: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/for-parents/webinar-comparing-financial-aid-awards>
- b) Types of Financial Aid*: Students may be offered various types of financial aid: grants, scholarships, loans, and/or work study. Have students review this page and watch the short video to become familiar with terms and funding: <https://www.cfnc.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/> In addition, make sure students bookmark this website for more information: <https://studentaid.gov/>
- c) Post-RDS: What happens after you complete your RDS interview? Be sure that students know where to find resources on their RDS status: <https://ncresidency.cfnc.org/residencyInfo/pdf/RDSStatusPg.pdf>; information on the

reconsideration and appeal process:

<https://ncresidency.cfnc.org/residencyInfo/pdf/RDSAppeals.pdf>; and other FAQs:

<https://ncresidency.cfnc.org/residencyInfo/studentFAQ>

- d) **After You Apply:** Congratulations! Students completed their admission application(s) to college. Now what? Offer students this handout to review: <https://www.cfnc.org/media/yuqpmtilj/i-applied-now-what.pdf> In addition, students will want to understand what it means to be waitlisted, just in case: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/after-youve-applied/what-to-do-if-youre-waitlisted>
- e) Students may also want to become familiar with the [College Redirection Pool](#), in case they aren't accepted, they are waitlisted, or want to look elsewhere later in their senior year: <https://www2.cfnc.org/crp>

8. Promote Your Event

Get the Word Out

CFNC offers a social media toolkit, as well as Spanish resources for educators. In addition, you can promote your event within your school, your community, and other media outlets! Let us know if we can assist in any way. Be sure to visit CFNC.org/C2C for all of our resources.

Sample Letters

Sample Recruitment Letter

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS
(MONTH) (YEAR)

Dear (NAME OF ORGANIZATION),
(NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) is pleased to announce its participation in the statewide NC Countdown to College event. In an effort to further expand college access initiatives, College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) and the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (CACRAO) are co-sponsoring the annual NC Countdown to College Month to be held (C2C) DATES AND YEAR). The goal of NC Countdown to College Month is to provide every graduating high school senior the opportunity to apply to college online through CFNC.org with a particular focus on helping first-generation students and students who may not otherwise apply to college.

We will be hosting our event on (DATE(S)) 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 CFNC 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 in the direction of 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 (NAME, CONTACT INFO).

Thank you!

(YOUR NAME)

(YOUR TITLE)

Student/Family Information Letter

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS

(MONTH) (YEAR)

Dear Students and Families,

During (C2C DATES), College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) and Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (CACRAO) will be sponsoring NC Countdown to College Month. On (DATE(s) OF EVENT), all seniors expected to graduate in June (YEAR) will be encouraged to use the CFNC.org online application to apply for admission to a North Carolina college or university, if they have not already done so. This event is possible due to the collaborative efforts of the administration, faculty, and staff at (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL), as well as students, their families, and volunteers across the community.

The purpose of this event is to support students in completing three important college enrollment steps: **Residency Determination Service (RDS); FAFSA; and College Applications**. In order to fully participate, students will need to have an account on CFNC.org. Your student will use his/her CFNC Account for both 1) college applications, and 2) completion of RDS (to establish eligibility for in-state tuition and state grants).

CFNC also provides a [College Application Checklist](#) for students to download from the www.cfnc.org/C2C website. Students and their families will need to work together to prepare because parent information is essential to complete RDS and FAFSA. CFNC provides a helpful chart of parent and student information needed to complete the FAFSA and RDS. We encourage all students to print and review the [College Application Checklist](#) prior to the event, as well as the [FAFSA/RDS chart](#).

Families are welcome to visit (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) on (DATE(s) OF EVENT) to assist their student during the NC Countdown to College events. In addition, if family members are interested in volunteering or guest speaking during the event, please let me know. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, assist students with the completion of CFNC online college applications, or distribute information about financial aid opportunities.

If you have any questions, please call (NAME, TITLE), at (PHONE NUMBER). Thank you in advance for your support of this exciting initiative to encourage North Carolina's students to make college a part of their future.

Sincerely,
(SCHOOL COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/SITE COORDINATOR)
[If printing, attach copies of College Application Checklist and FAFSA/RDS chart.]

Sample Spanish Student/Family Informative Letter

SCHOOL LOGO
SCHOOL ADDRESS

(MONTH) (YEAR)

Estimados Estudiantes y Padres de Familia,
Durante el mes de Octubre, (YEAR), la Fundación Universitaria de Carolina del Norte (*College Foundation of North Carolina, CFNC*) y la Asociación de las Carolinas de Secretarios Generales y Oficiales de Admisiones (*Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, CACRAO*) van a patrocinar NC Countdown to College. Una semana durante este mes, todos los estudiantes de último año que piensan graduarse en junio del (YEAR) serán animados a usar las solicitudes de la página en la red de CFNC.org para solicitar ingreso a una universidad de Carolina del Norte si no lo han hecho hasta ese punto. Este evento es posible solo por los esfuerzos colaborados de la administración, la facultad, y el personal de (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL), y también por los estudiantes, sus familias y voluntarios de la comunidad.

El propósito de este programa es para ayudar estudiantes en completar tres cosas importantes: Residency Determination Service (RDS); FAFSA; y sus aplicaciones para la universidad. Los estudiantes y sus familias deberán trabajar juntos para prepararse porque la información de los padres es esencial para completar el RDS y la FAFSA. CFNC proporciona una tabla de información para padres y estudiantes necesaria para completar [FAFSA y RDS](#).

Para participar completamente los estudiantes deben tener una cuenta gratis de CFNC en línea e información para la solicitud de ingreso. Un manual del estudiante (*College Application Checklist*) también está disponible para los estudiantes en la página de Recursos en cfnc.org/C2C. Estamos aconsejando a todos los estudiantes que impriman y completen la información en el manual del estudiante antes del evento para que tengan todos los datos disponibles para cumplir las solicitudes de ingreso en línea. Anticipamos que los estudiantes y sus familias tendrán que trabajar juntos en compilar la información que se encuentra en el manual del estudiante (*College Application Checklist*).

Los padres de familia son bienvenidos a visitar (NAME OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL) el (DATE(s) OF EVENT) para ayudar a su hijo/hija durante el proceso de completar la solicitud. Además, si miembros de su familia están interesado en ofrecerse voluntariamente durante el evento, favor de contactarme. Los voluntarios pueden saludar y registrar estudiantes, ayudar a estudiantes con las solicitudes de ingreso a la universidad, o distribuir información sobre oportunidades de ayuda financiera.

Si tiene cualquier pregunta, por favor llama a (NAME, TITLE), al (PHONE NUMBER). Gracias adelantado por su apoyo en esta iniciativa emocionante para animar a los estudiantes de Carolina del Norte a hacer la universidad parte de su futuro.

Sinceramente,
(SCHOOL COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/ SITE COORDINATOR)