Creating a College-Going Culture in Your School

Generation TX Training Manual for Counselors, Spring 2011

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About Generation TX

It’s starting. All over Texas, students are finding their voices, setting strong goals, and fueling the movement called Generation TX. Through both inspiration and information, Generation TX connects us to each other and clarifies the steps on the path to college and career education, from taking challenging classes, to applying to college, to finding the money to pay for school.

We’re Generation TX, and what’s next for Texas depends on us. We’re strong. We’re determined. And we’re not alone—we’re supported by our families, friends, and a community that depends on us to graduate high school ready to succeed in college and our careers. We’re taking the next step toward reaching our goals and fulfilling our dreams. Together, we will create the most successful generation ever. Generation TX is what’s next for Texas.

Texas is the fastest-growing state in the nation and over half its students come from low-income homes. These students are less likely to pursue education beyond high school. Applying to college and career education programs can be a long, complex, and often overwhelming endeavor, especially for students who are unfamiliar with the process.

Generation TX inspires Texas students to believe that college or career education is attainable and relevant to their lives. It brings together the best resources and clarifies the actions students need to take to pursue education beyond high school, connecting them to the right information and offering support at every step in the process. It galvanizes Texas communities to support the next generation and empowers students to generate a new future for themselves, their families, and all Texans.

We invite students, parents, educators, businesses, and community leaders to pledge their support for this movement and join Generation TX today.

Key Goals

To develop a commitment among stakeholders to create a college-going culture in Texas public schools that will prepare all students for a post-secondary education.

To clarify the processes of applying for college admission and student financial aid.

To increase awareness of and build support for the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).
Generation TX Messaging

Messaging is a way to express, through simple language, what it is we want people to know about Generation TX and why they should care. This Generation TX messaging platform provides a set of consistent language for us to use as we talk about Generation TX. We invite you to use elements provided in this messaging platform as you create pieces promoting Generation TX. The more consistent we can be about how we describe Generation TX, the more recognizable and powerful this movement will become. Please contact info@GenTX.org (see Resources at a Glance on page 32) with any questions or suggestions regarding this messaging platform.

Name Guidelines

The brand and name architecture for Generation TX can be described as follows. For all three, preserve the capitalization and spacing as “Generation TX” and do not use any punctuation (like a dash) to add components to this name; it must stand alone.

Primary Brand
Generation TX (spoken Generation Texas)
“Generation TX” is the primary and preferred articulation of the brand. The first mention of the brand in any brand materials should always be “Generation TX” (not “GenTX”), and “Generation TX” should be used (rather than “GenTX”) whenever possible.

Shorthand/Sub-brand
GenTX (spoken Gen Tex)
“GenTX” may be used as the brand’s shorthand, particularly in reference to the URL and other interactive features (such as the Twitter feed title “GenTX Updates”). Do not use GenTX as the first reference.

Spanish
Generación TX (spoken Heh-neh-rah-see-ON Teh-has)
“Generación TX” is the Spanish-language version of “Generation TX” and should be used in Spanish translations and in brand materials created for markets where the primary language spoken is Spanish.

Messaging Guidelines

Tagline
Generation TX is what’s next for Texas.

Single Sentence
Generation TX is a statewide, grassroots movement creating what’s next for Texas—a culture of college and career readiness that leads to the most successful generation ever.

Short Description
All over Texas, students are finding their voices, setting strong goals, and fueling the movement called Generation TX. Through both inspiration and information, Generation TX connects us to each other and clarifies the steps on the path to college and career readiness. Generation TX is what’s next for Texas.

Medium Description
It’s starting. All over Texas, students are finding their voices, setting strong goals, and fueling the movement called Generation TX. Through both inspiration and information, Generation TX connects us to each other and clarifies the steps on the path to college and career readiness, from taking challenging classes, to applying to college, to finding the money to pay for school.

We’re Generation TX, and what’s next for Texas depends on us. We’re strong. We’re determined. And we’re not alone—we’re supported by our families, friends, and a community that depends on us to graduate high school ready to succeed in college and our careers. We’re taking the next step toward reaching our goals and fulfilling our dreams. Together, we will create the most successful generation ever. Generation TX is what’s next for Texas.
Generation TX Messaging

Ways to Talk About Generation TX

Building excitement for Generation TX is one of the most powerful things you can do to get the movement on its feet and encourage people to participate. When you talk about Generation TX, try to use encouraging, motivational language to set the mindset and create excitement and passion. The following are short phrases you can use when talking about Generation TX.

Inspiration
Learn what’s next. Do what’s next. Become what’s next. You don’t have to know every step. You just need to know what to do next, one step at a time.

Motivation
Q: What’s next for Texas depends on you. What is your role in making it happen?
A: What’s next for Texas depends on me, and I’m:
• Taking challenging classes so I’ll be ready for college
• Hosting a FAFSA workshop
• Becoming a nurse
• Teaching my little brother good study habits
• Learning how to apply to college

Action
Join the Generation TX movement! Go to GenTX.org and create a profile, get inspired, set your goals, and find events and resources. Together, we’ll help all Texas students graduate high school ready to succeed in college and their careers.
GenTX.org Overview

What Is GenTX.org

The Generation TX website offers a wide array of resources including an online community. GenTX.org is designed to connect Texas students and those who support them through an online community and unified resource center that clarifies the steps that they need to take on the path to college and career education.

GenTX.org allows users to Get Inspired about going to college and having a career, Make It Happen through great resources, connect with a supportive Community, and see it all come together through an easy-to-use Calendar—all in one website.

Get Inspired

Sharing powerful, uplifting stories of real people is an important part of engaging students and supporters on an emotional level. A perfect complement to the information and resources, inspirational stories on GenTX.org motivate students and supporters alike to embrace the challenges of Generation TX. Learn More, Earn More poster series featured in the campus kits and in the Download Center are also in this section. They provide powerful motivation for students to see the impact higher education can have on their earning potential.

Get Started: Watch the video stories on GenTX.org and rate your favorites. Comment on three stories and let us know why you like them.

Make It Happen

Information about choosing a college, college admissions, and financial aid is readily available online, but it can be difficult to sort through and evaluate. We’ve gathered the best online and offline resources into one place and organized them by how to prepare, how to apply, and how to pay for college. As our community grows and becomes more active, Make It Happen will become an indispensable tool for students seeking the most useful and reliable information the web has to offer.

Get Started: If you find or know of an online resource that you think others could benefit from, submit it to the Resource section. Spend time rating your five favorite resources listed on GenTX.org to help the best ones bubble up to the top.

Community

The online community is the heart of GenTX.org and where we hope you’ll spend a fair amount of time answering questions, lending support, and being a role model for the community. As a community leader, your voice carries a lot of weight and it doesn’t take much to make a big difference. Share your knowledge, encourage students to share their successes, and keep the community informed of any great resources you find online or offline.

Get Started: Join as many groups as you feel are a good fit for you. If none of the current groups suits your needs, create and monitor a group! Some ideas for groups to lead or join are: financial aid, ApplyTexas/application process, higher education options (2-year, 4-year) and degrees, test prep and volunteering. Try to post in the Community section weekly or more often if possible.
GenTX.org Overview

Calendar
Students and their parents can easily keep up to date on important application deadlines and upcoming test dates, or find local resources and college-going events with our interactive calendar. Anyone can submit an event for consideration, and finding an event or an important date is as easy as clicking a box to customize results. As a central hub for all college-going events in Texas, the GenTX.org calendar makes it easy for local organizations to extend their services and offerings to more students and families.

Get Started: It’s important that GenTX.org include every college-relevant event happening in your community so that students and parents in your community have access to people, information, and activities to help them through the college process. If you know of an event or you’re personally holding an event and you think others could benefit from it, submit it to the Calendar section. Try to submit an event each month.

Download Center
The Download Center is a resource designed to serve as a guide, reference, and access point for using the Generation TX brand and associated materials. Visit often and feel free to download any materials to help in your community outreach. The download center includes things like customizable logos, posters, and presentations (see the How To: Generation TX Brand System portion of this manual).

Get Started: Co-brand your logo with the Generation TX logo and start using it everywhere you can think of. The Download Center’s logo finder provides step-by-step instructions for how to make a co-branded logo.

Ways You Can Make GenTX.org Even Better

1. Keep the community active and vibrant
Encourage students and supporters to join and participate—provide an incentive for doing so! (You can find information about how to incentivize students in the How To: Use the Generation TX Brand System portion of this manual).

Visit and participate in the Community as often as you can. Log in regularly and use the “Invite a friend” function. Don’t be afraid to start a conversation.

2. Crosslink to GenTX.org
Include the GenTX.org URL in all of your outreach efforts, and direct people to the community forums/groups when they have questions or are looking for college-related information.

If you have a website, link back to GenTX.org. If you know someone with a relevant website or who could benefit from sharing content on GenTX.org, introduce them to GenTX.org and ask them to link to GenTX.org from their website.

3. Help whitelist GenTX.org
If you work at a school or similar organization, you may have noticed GenTX.org isn’t available on closed networks. Work with school or organization administration to put GenTX.org on the list of trusted websites.
GenTX.org Tour

Join the Community

2. Click Join at the top of any page or, in the carousel at the top of the home page, you’ll see a box called “We Are GenTX” with a boy and a Generation TX skateboard. Click Join Now in that box.
3. Once on the sign-up page, be prepared to enter the following fields:
   - Screen name
   - Zip code
   - Birthday
   - Whether you are a student or a supporter

Once you’ve hit Submit, you’ll receive an email asking you to confirm your account. Be sure to do so.

Complete Your Profile

After you’ve confirmed your account, log in and be sure to create your community profile. This can be found in your account settings in the Community section of the site. On your profile page, answer the profile questions.

Public Ed and Returning Students

- High school name
- What’s your favorite subject in school?
- What are your plans for graduation?
- What are the challenges and trade-offs in pursuing higher education? Is it worth it?
- How is getting a degree or certificate going to change your life?
- How are you going to use your education to make your generation the most successful ever?
- Why are you Generation TX?
- What is your favorite quote?

Higher Ed Students

- High school name
- Higher education institution name
- Higher education graduating class year
- What are you studying?
- What are your plans after graduation?
- What are the challenges and trade-offs in pursuing higher education?
- How is getting a degree or certificate going to change your life?
- How are you going to use your education to make your generation the most successful ever?
- Why are you Generation TX?
- What is your favorite quote?

Supporters

- High school name
- College or career training
- What is your career or vocation?
- How has your education impacted your career and life?
- From where you are now, what do you believe about the role of education, especially college?
- What advice do you have for the students of Generation TX?
- Why do you believe in Generation TX?
- What are your goals as a Generation TX supporter?
- Do you have special skills or expertise to share?
GenTX.org Tour

Stay Active and Update Your Status Regularly

Tell the community what you are doing right now to make it happen. Be sure to encourage others who are posting their goals by sending them messages—even if it’s just to say, “Keep it up” or to provide information that might be helpful to them.


2. In the main area of the page, you’ll see the question, “What are you doing to making it happen?” Type in your answer and hit Post update.

Join or Start a Group

Join as many groups as you feel are a good fit for you. If you’re looking for a group that doesn’t yet exist, create it! Groups can be public, private, or hidden. We encourage you to be very involved in the Groups section—this is where community discussions happen and where we hope you spend most of your time while visiting the site.


2. When you get to your main Activity page, click on the Groups tab. Once on this page, you’ll be able to join an existing Group or start a new one by clicking the Create a Group button.

   Note: if the button does not appear on this page go to My Account > Messages and compose a message to user Dev_Admin letting us know. We can then upgrade your account settings to create groups.

3. To start a new group, simply provide a group name, description, choose private or public, and start inviting your friends from the online community.

As a community leader, we’d love for you to be an administrator of a group. Being an administrator means you’ll receive updates when people join, post, or share. It’s up to the administrator to monitor the activity in that group to ensure the conversation remains active, provides valuable content, and helps new group members. If you’d like to be a group administrator, please contact info@GenTX.org. Some sample Groups you might administer include:

- Financial aid
- ApplyTexas/application process
- Higher education options (2-yr, 4-yr, certificate) and degrees
- Test prep
- Volunteering
Add Resources

It’s important that GenTX.org be full of great resources and links to important information. If you find or know of an online resource that you think others could benefit from, submit it to the Resource section by following these easy steps:


2. From there, you’ll be able to submit a resource. Keep in mind these submission guidelines:
   - Must contribute to building a college-going and career-ready culture and ultimately an educated workforce
   - Must align in some way with at least one of these Generation TX topics: How to Prepare, How to Apply, and/or How to Pay
   - May include programs, organizations, and offline resources as long as they meet the above criteria

3. Also be sure to have the following information handy, as you’ll need to answer specific questions about the resource you are submitting:
   - Your name
   - Your email
   - Your phone (in case we need to contact you with questions)
   - Resource title
   - Resource website
   - Resource description
   - What is the resource all about? (e.g., choosing a path, applying for college, loans)
   - Who is the audience? (e.g., students, supporters)
GenTX.org Tour

Add Events

It’s important that GenTX.org be full of every college-relevant event so students/parents in your community have access to people, information, and activities to help them through the college process. If you know of an event or you’re personally holding event and you think others could benefit from it, submit it to the Calendar section by following these easy steps:


2. From there, you’ll be able to submit an event. Keep in mind these submission guidelines:
   - Must contribute to building a college-going and career-ready culture and ultimately an educated workforce
   - Must be open to the public. We will not post any private or invitation-only events
   - Must align in some way with at least one of these Generation TX topics: How to Prepare, How to Apply, and/or How to Pay
   - May include clinics, fairs, workshops, social functions, tours, and ongoing programs with specific meeting times, etc.
   - May be an online or in-person event as long as it meets the criteria above

3. Also be sure to have the following information handy, as you’ll need to answer specific questions about the resource you are submitting:
   - Your name
   - Your email
   - Your phone
   - Event title
   - Event description
   - Event venue and full address
   - Event date, start and end time
   - Event hosting organization
   - Event contact name, email and phone if different from yours
   - Event website
   - Is the event in English or Spanish?
   - Event type (e.g., presentation, workshop)
   - Event topics (e.g., test prep, essays and writing, financial aid)
   - Event audience (e.g., students, supporters)

Use the Download Center

You’ll find a link to the Download Center in the bottom footer of GenTX.org or you can access it directly by visiting www.downloads.GenTX.org. We will ask for your email address as your confirmation that you agree with the licensing agreement (Note: you are not setting up an account and we will not email you) and you should be all set to start downloading!

The How To: Use the Generation TX Brand System portion of this manual will explain how to use all of the tools available there.
Brand System and Tools

What It Is

The brand system contains all the various building blocks of the Generation TX brand. They are a way to consistently build awareness, spread the message, and help those who are part of this community find and identify each other.

We encourage local communities to adopt Generation TX and make it their own. We provide easy access to the brand system so that local communities can use it to amplify their own efforts and tie those efforts back to a greater statewide movement.

Where To Find Them

Most of the elements of the brand system such as logos, templates, and presentations can be found quickly and easily through the Download Center at GenTX.org. For some materials that are already produced, such as certain wearables and posters, you can contact us directly to request or purchase these items (For details, see the section about promotional items on page 28).

What the Brand System Pieces Are

Logo Finder *(Logos available for download on the GenTX.org Download Center)*

Guides you to the correct Generation TX logo in the format that is right for you. The Generation TX logo can be customized to co-brand with other logos and organizations. By making a few simple choices in the online logo finder, we’ll guide you to the best logo to fit your needs.

Color Palette

Is bright, hopeful, and vibrant. Multiple color combinations are possible and encouraged.

Photography *(Available for download on the GenTX.org Download Center)*

The authentic face of this movement. These are portraits of real Texas students in campus settings and in their communities, along with their friends, families, and supporters. They reflect the diversity of their communities and project strength, power, excitement, and energy.
Brand System and Tools

Printable Materials *(Available for download on the GenTX.org Download Center)*

**Info Sheet Flyer**
This single page flyer gives a quick introduction to Generation TX, and encourages recipients to go to GenTX.org and join the movement. Available in both English and Spanish, this flyer is a great tool to pass out at events and presentations.

**Generation TX Posters**
One of the best ways to increase awareness of the Generation TX message is by displaying colorful Generation TX posters on a campus or in a community.

- **GenTX Mindset**
  A poster that inspires and promotes the Generation TX mindset, showing the faces and the strong belief these students must have in themselves.

- **Learn More, Earn More**
  This series of posters simply and clearly breaks down how the time spent towards achieving higher education incrementally increases earning potential and financial success. Several career paths are included in the series in order to demonstrate some of the varied options a student has (including one focused on commitments of 2 years or less).

- **Flyer template and poster shell**
  The Generation TX flyer template can be used to promote local events. This 8.5” x 11” template is easy for you to download, customize and print. For a greater impact, use this template with the large colorful 18” x 24” poster shell.

**Join Card**
A card that can be used at events that allows people to take the first step in joining Generation TX while attending the event by pledging their support and providing their email address, either by printing it on the card and returning it to the event organizer or simply emailing Join to join@GenTX.org. A follow-up email is then sent to their email address that encourages them to fill out a profile at GenTX.org, rewarding that next step with a free GenTX lanyard in the mail.

*Continued on Next Page*
Brand System and Tools

Digital Materials *(Available for download on the GenTX.org Download Center)*

**Generation TX PowerPoint Presentation**

This presentation contains a variety of slides already created that covers basic Generation TX background and content. Users can customize this presentation by creating new slides and deleting unwanted ones using the master slide layouts in the document.

**Email Invite Graphic**

A Generation TX branded email graphic is available to use as a header on HTML email invites.

**Digital Wallpaper**

Quickly GenTX your computer lab or any computer’s desktop with several digital wallpaper designs. These are loaded into the Pictures library folder of the computer’s My Documents and then selected as the desktop background.

**Web Buttons and Banners**

Add a GenTX.org button or banner to your community’s website linking website visitors directly to GenTX.org.

**Kits**

We offer quick and easy zipped file kits that contain a variety of downloadables you can get with one easy click on our Download Center.

**Presentation kit:**

- Generation TX Base PowerPoint Presentation *(English)*
- Info sheet PDFs *(English and Spanish)*

**Promotion kit:**

- Generation TX messaging platform
- Mindset poster
- Learn More Earn More poster series *(8 total, 2 in Spanish)*
- Digital wallpaper
- Web buttons and banners
- Email invite graphic
Brand System and Tools

Coming Soon

A few more items are coming soon to the Download Center:
• The essentials students need to know to help get them on the path to prepare, apply and pay for college:
  • FAFSA poster
  • ApplyTexas poster
  • CCRS poster
• “Join GenTX” table tents: Information about GenTX.org and the Generation TX movement urging students to join. Use in computer labs, cafeterias, etc.
• Participant survey: A participant survey to help you know if your efforts are working and what else we can help you with.
Story Videos

What They Are

These videos show the real face of the Generation TX movement. They vividly show students, parents, and supporters telling their personal stories of their journey toward higher education. The student stories help us get to know who this generation of students is, how they think and feel, and what they hope to achieve. Parents speak of their own experiences, and their hopes for their children. Notable supporters like San Antonio’s Mayor Julián Castro and Fort Worth’s State Senator Wendy Davis share their struggles and victories in pursuing higher education, which led to success in achieving their goals. Several videos are in Spanish (with English subtitles).

Where To Find Them

The videos are available on GenTX.org, YouTube, Vimeo, and TeacherTube and can be shared, favorited and commented on.

- GenTX.org/stories
- GenTX.org/vimeo
- GenTX.org/youtube
- GenTX.org/teachertube

The videos are also all available on DVD, to use with a conventional DVD player or a computer with DVD playing capabilities. If you would like a copy of the stories on DVD, send an email to info@GenTX.org.

How To Use Them

The story videos are an excellent way to inspire and inform people of the Generation TX movement, to get them interested in learning more, and getting them involved at GenTX.org. Consider using the videos the following ways:

- Sharing videos via email, Facebook, Twitter
- Posting a video on your website
- In-classroom presentations to students and educators
- Watching videos in computer labs, libraries, or Go Centers
- Presentations to groups of parents, businesses, or other supporters
Public Service Announcements

What They Are

We have created public service advertising (PSA) for television and web use designed to drive awareness and introduce people to Generation TX through the words and images of the students and supporters themselves. These fast-paced spots create excitement and give the viewer a taste of what this movement looks like. The PSAs are available in Spanish and English, in both 30 second and 60 second lengths.

Where To Find Them

You can access all the PSAs in the Download Center of GenTX.org where you can copy the HTML code to post a video embedded on your website, or download the videos directly for viewing on a computer. You can also find the PSAs on Vimeo and YouTube.

How To Use Them

Please keep in mind the possibility of using donated funds to secure broadcast placement for the PSAs with local media affiliates. If you would like to run the PSA on local television, consider reaching out to local businesses or organizations to help you fund the media purchase. TV and radio stations are frequently asked to donate air time for PSAs, and the tips on the next page should help get you started.
Public Service Announcements

How To Use Them

1. Identify local television and radio stations that reach your key audiences
   Consider which stations appeal both to students and their influencers to target your outreach efforts.

2. Locate contact information for the community relations directors at each station
   Community relations directors make decisions about which PSAs to use. Visit each media outlet’s website to identify the community relations director and contact information. If the information is not listed on the website, call the station and ask for the name of the proper contact.

3. Assign outreach responsibilities
   Ask supporters and allies to reach out to TV and radio stations where they may already have personal contacts. If you or a colleague has a contact with a particular reporter at the station, let the reporter know you are requesting that their station run the PSA. They may be able to work with the community relations director to find air time for the PSA.

4. Draft and send a tailored pitch letter to each station
   If you are working with multiple partners at the local level, consider having several partner organizations jointly sign and send the letter to the stations to show that the movement has wide local support.

5. Follow up with community relations directors by phone
   Explain the importance of the movement to your local community and how they can help.

6. Request reporting from the media outlet
   Ask them to provide the frequency (dates/times the PSA spots aired) and the audience reach for that time slot.

A sample letter for reaching out to local stations is provided on the next page.

Be creative with where you air PSAs. Don’t forget about cafeteria or commons-area TVs in high schools, on scoreboards at high school football games, and at local retailers (e.g., on the TVs at your area Best Buy).

You also have the option to localize the TV PSAs with your organization for your community, e.g., add your logo or information alongside the Generation TX logo at the end of the PSA. If you’re interested in creating a localized PSA, please contact the Generation TX team at info@GenTX.org and we will be happy to assist with your request.

1 Source: KnowHow2Go “On-the-Ground Playbook”, knowhow2go.org
Public Service Announcements

How To Use Them

Below is a sample letter for reaching out to local stations:

Dear [name of community relations director],

As someone with strong ties to Texas who has the power to influence millions of young minds, I am writing to request your participation in a movement that will shape the lives of the young people of Texas and the future of this state like no other. It is called Generation TX.

Texas is the fastest-growing state in the nation, and over half of our students come from low-income homes. These students are less likely to pursue education beyond high school, leaving Texas further behind as it tries to compete in a 21st century economy. For those who do take on the challenge, and particularly students who will be the first in their family to pursue education beyond high school, the process can be overwhelming or seemingly impossible. Texas is determined to do something to turn this around.

Generation TX, an initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, is a statewide grassroots movement focused on creating a culture of college and career education that leads to the most successful generation ever. Through both inspiration and information, Generation TX connects students to each other and clarifies the steps they need to take on the path to education beyond high school, from taking the right classes and tests, to applying to colleges, to finding the money to pay for school.

Generation TX has prepared a series of public service announcements (PSAs) for TV and radio that provide students with the information they need to prepare, apply, and pay for college. We would be honored if you would consider donating media space to support our efforts.

We hope that you and [insert station name] will consider including Generation TX PSAs in your rotation. I will follow up shortly to discuss the movement and answer any questions. In the meantime, you can view the PSAs at downloads.GenTX.org or feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

[your name and contact information here]
Promotional Items

What They Are

Generation TX promotional items are a great incentive to motivate students, parents, and fellow community leaders, especially when given as a reward for taking steps towards higher education. These promotional items provide students and supporters with the opportunity to get involved in the movement by wearing Generation TX as a part of their everyday.

Where To Find Them

You will be provided with a sampling of Generation TX materials at the training session. By wearing Generation TX gear yourself, you increase visibility for the movement and help spread the word about Generation TX. In addition to what you’ll receive today, Generation TX materials include:

- T-shirts
- Lanyards
- Tube socks
- Slap bracelets
- Silicon bracelets
- Stickers
- Pencils
- Yard signs
- Buttons
- Bumper stickers
- Posters
- Window clings
- Branded plastic bags
CCRS, FAFSA, and ApplyTexas

What It Is

The most important step in accessing education beyond high school is understanding:

- The knowledge you need to succeed
- Applying for financial aid
- Applying to higher ed institutions

Luckily, there are comprehensive resources available that address each one: the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the ApplyTexas common application for admission.

How To Use Them

In order to create a college-going and career-ready culture in Texas, we must make students and families aware of these resources and their role in the college-going process, and must engage them to take action toward completing these critical steps needed to obtain education beyond high school. You will find Generation TX PowerPoint presentations in the GenTX.org Download Center that include slides about CCRS, FAFSA, and ApplyTexas – use these when presenting to your audiences, and don’t forget to evaluate what they learn from your presentation at the end, with short surveys that you will print from the Download Center (see How To: Evaluate Your Efforts at the end of this training manual).

Where To Start

On the following pages, we provide a primer of critical information you should be conveying about each. There is a PowerPoint presentation available for download from the Download Center that covers the highlights of CCRS, FAFSA, and ApplyTexas. The PowerPoint was developed to help you run a workshop, so go grab it!
CCRS Workshop

Objectives of a CCRS workshop:

- Explain what the CCRS is and why it’s important
- Simplify how students can use CCRS on their path to higher education

What does “college readiness” mean?

College readiness means having both the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in college-level courses or the skilled workforce without remedial classes.

What are the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards?

Texas was a leader in creating standards to align what is taught in Texas public schools and colleges so that what students learn in high school best prepares them to be successful in college or the workplace.

What is in the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards?

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards define the core knowledge in English, math, science, and social studies that students need to know to succeed in introductory level college coursework as well as the skills in oral and written communication, reasoning, research and related skills that will help them be successful. For more information, go to www.txccrs.org.

How do I use the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards?

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards are not a checklist of what a student needs to go to college, but the more knowledge and skills a student can master, the better chance they have of being college-ready.

How should I prepare?

Take the most challenging classes available to you in high school so you will have mastered as much of this information as you can before college.

Why should I care about college readiness?

Being college-ready can save you money. All students entering a Texas public college or university will have to take examinations demonstrating college-readiness or be eligible for one of the exemptions below:

- Received a TAKS scale score of at least 2200 on the math section and/or 2200 on the English Language Arts section with a writing subsection score of at least 3
- Scored a 23 or higher on the ACT composite and a minimum of 19 on both the English and math tests
- Earned a combined (verbal + math) SAT score of 1070, with a minimum score of 500 on both sections
- Enroll in a certificate program of 42 or fewer semester credit hours a public community college or technical college

Students not demonstrating college-readiness have to take additional classes that cost money, but do not go towards college credit.

In addition, the knowledge in the College and Career Readiness Standards will be integrated into the end-of-course exams that every Texas student must take.

- TAKS: If you are a current high school student (2010-2011), you will continue to take the TAKS test and must successfully complete the exit level TAKS (Spring of 11th grade) in order to graduate. A college-ready score (2200) on TAKS can exempt you from college assessments such as ACC-UPLACER.
- STAAR: If you are in 8th grade or below (entering 9th grade in Fall 2011), you will begin taking the new STAAR end-of-course exam which is much more rigorous and is aligned with the K-12 curriculum based on the CCRS. There will be minimum, proficient, and college ready performance standards. (Distinguished Program must place at college readiness level in Algebra II and English III).
FAFSA Workshop

Objectives of a FAFSA workshop:
- Explain what the FAFSA is and why it’s important
- To show students where to find the FAFSA
- To arm students with the basic information they will need to complete the form
- To help students understand how financial aid works, and when to submit FAFSA and financial aid forms

What is FAFSA?
The Free Application for Federal Student Aid collects information about family income in order to determine a student’s financial need. Filling out the FAFSA is the first step in the college financial aid process. College and universities use the information you provide on your FAFSA to determine how much money your family is expected to pay, and how much financial aid you’ll need.

What is the Expected Family Contribution and how is it determined?
The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is the amount of money your family is expected to pay for your college education. Financial need is the difference between the cost of college attendance and your family’s EFC. Financial need = Cost of Attendance – EFC. If you filed FAFSA online, within a few days you will receive your SAR. If you filed the paper FAFSA, in about four weeks you will receive your SAR (the Student Air Report (SAR) is a summary of the information you submitted on your FAFSA and indicates your actual EFC).

How much is the cost of college attendance?
The cost of attendance varies from college to college. Tuition, room and board, supplies, books, and transportation costs all factor in to a college’s cost of attendance.

When do I find out how much federal aid I am actually eligible for?
After you submit your FAFSA and any financial aid forms your school requires, you will received a financial aid package from your school. The time it takes to receive this package varies from school to school. To get the best package possible, apply for financial aid as soon as you can. Visit FAFSA Forecaster to get an idea of how much federal aid you may be eligible for. https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s1

FAFSA Tips
- The FAFSA is accepted beginning January 1st of the year you plan to enroll in school. So, for example, if you plan to enroll in school for Fall 2011, you can submit your FAFSA as early as January 1, 2011. Submit your FAFSA as soon as you can.
- The deadline to submit FAFSA on the web is June 30th.
- Encourage your parents to file their taxes as early as possible. Even though you can complete the FAFSA before filing taxes, taxes must be filed before college will award financial aid packages. So the earlier you complete this process, the better.
- File online if you can. It’s faster and more accurate: http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/
  - You and at least one of your parents will need a PIN. Apply for a PIN before you begin filling out the FAFSA. It is important to note that you will need a social security number to apply for a PIN: http://www.pin.ed.gov/PINWebApp/pinindex.jsp
  - If you require a paper copy, you can request one. Visit http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/options.htm for complete instructions or request a paper FAFSA by calling us at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or 319-337-5665. If you are hearing impaired, please contact the TTY line at 1-800-730-8913.
- Remember that filling out the FAFSA is the first step in the financial aid process, but many schools may require you to fill out additional forms. Complete and submit these forms as soon as you can to get the most financial aid possible. The deadline to submit these forms varies from school to school. Check with your school.
- Schools may offer you financial aid in addition to federal aid. The FAFSA doesn’t necessarily qualify you for additional aid from your school, but they may use the information you provided to determine your eligibility.
- FAFSA does not qualify for any scholarships. You will have to apply for scholarships separately.
FAFSA Workshop

REMEMBER:

- Any college financial aid office can assist you with questions on student financial aid and forms. Check with the financial aid office at a school in which you are interested or to which you are applying for assistance.

- The Texas Financial Aid Information Center (TFAIC) is a toll-free telephone hotline (1-888-311-8881) that can answer questions and direct you to resources regarding the college admission process as well as federal and Texas state financial aid. TFAIC call center representatives, who average more than 10 years experience in student financial aid, can provide:
  - Assistance with the Texas college admission process
  - Help with understanding and applying for federal and state student financial aid
  - Support in English and Spanish

No personal information is required in order to receive assistance. TFAIC representatives are available Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m.–6 p.m., and Fridays from 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Central Time.
ApplyTexas Workshop

Objectives of an ApplyTexas workshop:

• How to use ApplyTexas to apply to Texas schools
• Which schools do and don’t accept applications through ApplyTexas
• How to know the deadlines for the schools you are applying for

What is ApplyTexas?

ApplyTexas is a single application that students can submit to apply to any public 4-year university in Texas and many participating community and private colleges. Many private schools accept the ApplyTexas application. If a school is not listed in the drop-down menu, that school uses a different application, and you will need to visit that school’s website to learn their application process.

If I want to apply to more than one school, do I have to fill the entire application out several times?

No. The ApplyTexas website allows you to copy application information from one application to another.

How much does it cost?

Each school sets its own application fee. Fees range from $0-$60+. The following schools have no application fee:

• Texas A&M International University
• UT Brownsville
• UT El Paso
• UT Pan American
• UT Permian Basin

Do I have to complete my application all at once?

No. ApplyTexas allows you to save your progress as you go, so that you can complete your application at your leisure. You can edit your saved applications as many times as you want. But you will not be able to edit an application after you submit it, so be sure your information is COMPLETE and CORRECT before you hit Submit.

What will I need to know to complete my application?

In addition to basic personal information, you will need:

• High School Coursework: The dates on which you began and ended (or will end) your high school career and the dates on which you began and ended any previous college or university attendance
• Employment Information: Employment information for the past two years, including an address for the employer (either your own) or that of your parents/legal guardians (if you claim in-state residency based on their employment)
• Senior-Year Coursework: For entering U.S. freshmen, the exact titles and credit values of high school courses you are taking and will be taking during your senior year (also called your senior-year course schedule)

When is the deadline to apply to school?

Every school has its own application deadline. This is important! Make sure to check the deadlines for each school you wish to apply to in order to make sure you submit your application on time.

In addition to my ApplyTexas application, what else will I need to submit to be admitted to my college?

• Resumes or brag sheets must be mailed to your school if you plan on submitting these items
• Test scores. You will need to send your scores from your entrance exams (SAT, ACT) and college-credit exams (AP, IB, etc.) to your school
• Letters of recommendation, if you are submitting them, must be mailed to your school
• FAFSA and financial aid paperwork must be completed separately from the ApplyTexas application
What’s Next: Ideas About How to Get Started

Counselors, Teachers, and Public Ed Campus Administrators

Make Generation TX Visible

- Post *Learn More, Earn More* posters in areas where students can see and read them. Print them on 8.5x11 paper and hand them out to students to read at their leisure

- Place GenTX.org table tents near public computers, helping students keep the website top of mind when researching college information

Host Workshops

Host FAFSA and ApplyTexas workshops for students. Use the GenTX.org community calendar and tools from the Download Center to promote your workshops. These can be as simple as 30-minute sessions designed to increase awareness about these important applications to hands-on workshops designed to help students (and their families) fill out these forms.

Drive People to GenTX.org

- Help whitelist GenTX.org. Work with school administrators to put GenTX.org on the list of trusted websites
- Contribute content. Start a group, begin a discussion, answer student questions. Rate and recommend resources and add events to the GenTX.org calendar

Promote AP and Dual Credit Classes

The earlier students become accustomed to working at a college level, the easier the transition will be. Earning college credit in high school will help students save money and reduce the time it takes to complete their 4-year degree.

Use Incentives

Use Generation TX branded items as incentives to encourage students to make measurable goals and take steps towards achieving those goals. Examples might be providing tube socks to students who attend a test prep class or an after-school Generation TX event.
Where To Find Valuable Information

Generation TX is a program of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The core Generation TX team is based in Austin, with team members located throughout Texas. We’d love to hear from you with any questions, thoughts, ideas or feedback.

Stay Informed
Sign up for Generation TX email updates to stay informed.
Visit www.GenTX.org and click Join in the upper right corner.

Inquiries and Help
info@GenTX.org

Download Center
downloads.GenTX.org

Generación TX en Español
Para información en español, por favor llame al:
512-649-0242