Get Your GO Center Going!

Thank you for your commitment to help Texas students learn more about their higher education opportunities. Your efforts to establish a GO Center will open new doors for students. You'll provide encouragement, assistance and knowledge about how to plan, prepare, apply and pay for college.

This toolkit will provide you with information about GO Centers and suggestions about how to:

- Establish a GO Center in the community
- Recruit and train new G-Force members
- Support the GO Center and G-Force network
- Mentor G-Force members
- Provide assistance to parents

This toolkit is intended to provide recommendations for GO Center coordinators interested in creating and maintaining a GO Center. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the College for All Texans Foundation are not responsible for the implementation, support, or result of any of the recommendations listed within this document. Prior to implementing a GO Center, check your local school, school district and state guidelines for additional information.

Please note that throughout this toolkit, when we say “college” we are referring to community colleges and technical schools, in addition to 4-year universities. We recognize that community colleges and technical schools play a key role in preparing students for careers in many important fields.
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GO Centers are local centers designed to create a college-going culture. They are equipped with individuals and resources dedicated to promoting college awareness both within schools and in the surrounding communities. Statewide, GO Centers reach out to students and parents through community partnerships and provide them with the tools and information they need to consider going to college a reality.

**Background**

In March 1999, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board determined that due to declining college enrollment rates, the State needed a new plan to reverse the trend. The plan would concentrate on the most critical goals, set a date to reach those goals and create a means to measure the State’s progress.

Working with business, state and community leaders, the Coordinating Board designed a plan that was adopted in October 2000. *Closing the Gaps by 2015* is both the name and the goal of a statewide education initiative to close the educational gaps in Texas as well as between Texas and other states.

*Closing the Gaps by 2015* has been well received by State legislators and leaders in the business and education communities. The goals of the initiative are as follows:

- Close the Gaps in Participation – Enroll 630,000 more students in higher education.

- Close the Gaps in Success - award 210,000 undergraduate degrees, certificates and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs.

- Close the Gaps in Excellence - substantially increase the number of nationally recognized programs or services at colleges and universities in Texas.

- Close the Gaps in Research - increase the level of federal science and engineering research and development obligations to Texas institutions to 6.5 percent of the obligations to other higher education institutions across the nation.

What followed was a partnership of individuals and communities dedicated to finding grassroots solutions, one of which is the GO Center concept. GO Centers provide a unique means for reaching out directly to students and parents and connecting them...
with qualified coordinators, volunteers, school counselors, college representatives and community leaders committed to building a college-going culture.

GO Centers are not limited by geography. They can be established in traditional and non-traditional settings – from school campuses to public libraries to local workforce and community centers. GO Centers can also be mobile. Housed in trailers, Mobile GO Centers bring the center directly to the student community by traveling to traditional locations and other venues such as shopping malls or special event settings.

GO Centers in all their forms are unique and powerful tools because they go where students go. They serve as a point of contact and coordination between students, parents, P-12 counselors and institutions of higher education. They streamline the opportunity for students to discover resources to help them prepare and plan for college, and connect with volunteers – the G-Force – who can help them learn more about college and explore more options.

This toolkit contains best practices and recommendations from other GO Centers already operating across Texas and is designed to help you and your community successfully establish a GO Center.

What type of GO Center Do You Want to Establish?

You have several options for determining where and how you want to set up a GO Center.

- **Traditional GO Centers** – These are located in educational settings such as a high school campus. They can also be established in elementary and middle schools and at college and university campuses.

- **Satellite GO Centers** – These are located in non-traditional settings such as public libraries, local workforce centers or community centers.

- **Mobile GO Centers** – These are housed in trailers equipped with computers, printers and Internet connectivity. They travel to a variety of locations such as festivals, sporting events, supermarkets, shopping mall parking lots and schools that do not yet have a GO Center.
General Design Elements of a GO Center

While every GO Center is different, all GO Centers provide a network of student volunteers committed to creating a college-going culture and supporting GO Center efforts. These groups of students are called the G-Force. In addition to the volunteers, the common design elements of a GO Center include:

★ An open and accessible room or space (for example, a section of the library)
★ College-related printed material such as pamphlets and catalogs
★ Program applications for scholarships, financial aid, admission, etc.
★ Posters/banners promoting education topics, programs and institutions
★ Display area for a calendar of events (college fairs, test dates)
★ Computer terminals, printers and connections
★ Other resource materials as determined by the GO Center coordinator

“College G-Force members experience a sense of accomplishment when they realize they are encouraging and having an impact on high school students and their decisions to go to college.”

Lynda Edwards, North Lake College
A step-by-step guide to starting a GO Center

Step 1 - Obtain approval from the school district and principal
Step 2 - Secure a member of the school faculty or staff to be the GO Center coordinator
Step 3 - Designate a physical space to serve as the GO Center
Step 4 - Provide at least five dedicated computers with Internet access
Step 5 - Recruit and train students to become G-Force members
Step 6 - Develop a mission statement
Step 7 - Launch your GO Center!

Equipping Your GO Center

It is up to you to decide how you will arrange your GO Center. It is recommended that your GO Center contain the following:

- A minimum of five computers equipped with:
  - Word processing software
  - Internet capability
  - Web browser with a link to www.CollegeforAllTexans.com
  - Filter system

- General office equipment such as a printer, desks, chairs and phone
- Sign-in area
- Brochure and resource holders
- Wall decorations such as college pennants, photos, inspirational posters
- Resources to help students explore their career choices
- Additional GO Center resource recommendations:
  - Brochures and college catalogs
  - Information on financial aid, scholarships and FAFSA applications
  - Posters promoting higher education
  - Career resources and information
  - Information and resources related to choosing a major
Branding Your GO Center

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) will provide the slogan “College for All Texans” and the GO Center logo in .JPEG or PDF formats. These can be used to create branding items which work to increase awareness of the GO Center and its benefits. The logo and slogan cannot be changed. However, you may add a school name, the location and other relevant information. The branding items could include:

- Buttons, stickers and labels
- Banners, posters, pennants, flags
- T-shirts, hats
- Calendars
- Canvas tote bags
- Coffee mugs, cups, water bottles
- Key chains, Frisbees
- Pens and pencils
- Bumper stickers
- Bookmarks

It is also recommended that GO Centers partner with local businesses to produce branding and other advertising specialty items.

Creating a Mission Statement

All GO Center coordinators should develop a mission statement. A mission statement is a clear and concise sentence that describes the purpose of the GO Center. The coordinator can create it independently or involve other stakeholders such as parents, administrators, teachers, students and G-Force members. The benefit of involving others helps increase community participation.

Example: The mission of the GO Center is to increase the number of students choosing to go to college by encouraging them to pursue higher education goals and providing them the tools to do so.

Launching Your GO Center

Once you are ready to launch your GO Center, the G-Force members should be actively involved in the process. Your visibility and success will also be influenced by the participation of parents, teachers, and members of your community. Consider re-launching your GO Center each year to keep the community actively involved and better your outreach efforts to recruit more students. If there are Mobile GO Centers in your area, invite them to attend and participate in launch and re-launch efforts.
The launch process should include the following:

- **Set a date and time.** Start by looking at the campus and school district calendar. Speak with the principal regarding any other activities that may not be on the current schedule. Then coordinate around work schedules, after-school activities, testing dates, etc.

- **Invite guests and speakers.** Consider bringing in speakers who can generate interest in the GO Center, explain the mission and demonstrate the community’s commitment to helping students reach their college goals. Speakers could include school officials, students, parents, community leaders, business leaders and members of other community-based organizations.

- **Promote your launch.** Three weeks before launching your GO Center, begin making calls, sending emails and faxes or “Save the Date” postcard invitations to members of the community. Distribute promotional materials such as fliers or brochures on campus and in the community. A week ahead of time, provide fliers to send home with students to inform parents, contact school newspaper editors and work closely with collegiate G-Force members and those in the academic community to get the word out.

- **Inform the media.** A month in advance of your launch, contact members of the media such as newspapers, radio and television stations to ask their preferences for receiving information (by phone, email or fax). Consider creating a press release a few weeks in advance of your launch date. The release should announce the launch, define the GO Center and its mission, and provide contact information for reporters interested in learning more or covering the event. The release should never be more than one page and if emailed, should not be sent as an attachment. Cut and paste your release into the body of the email. It is also a good idea to send a Media Advisory a day or two before the launch as a reminder. A media advisory is a simple explanation outlining the “who, what, when, where and why” of an event. A sample press release and media advisory are included at the end of this toolkit.

“The G-Force is an empowering experience for our students because they see themselves as role models for the next generation of educated citizens.”

Richard Kirk, Texas State Technical College, Harlingen
The GO Center coordinator provides direct support and assistance to G-Force members and promotes the college-going message to other professional staff. Based on previous evaluations of GO Centers, it is clear that the coordinator is critical to creating a successful center. The coordinator must be an individual who believes in the GO Center’s mission and purpose and is able to convey this dedication to foster further student and community interest.

Responsibilities of the Coordinator

- Promote higher education to every student
- Assist students with researching career, financial aid, and higher education options
- Fulfill administrative duties that G-Force members, as students, may not be allowed to do. This includes matters involving confidentiality, academic or guidance counseling
- Recruit, train, motivate and lead G-Force members
- Assist G-Force members with preparing, launching and running the GO Center
- Plan and coordinate activities related to creating a college-going culture

Duties of the Coordinator

- Set schedules
  - Create and post a schedule indicating hours of operation
  - Set work schedules for G-Force members
  - Set goals to be accomplished throughout the academic year
  - Schedule events in which to participate

- Coordinate events and presentations
  - Present information on higher education topics at the GO Center
  - Create presentations for classrooms, meetings, community centers
  - Direct G-Force members in ways they can help with presentations
  - Create ways to increase involvement in school and community

- Update your resources
  - Research free resources
  - Order resources and supplies for the GO Center
  - Make forms and applications available to parents and students
Document your success
» Keep a sign-in sheet at the GO Center and ensure students sign-in
» Keep a log of G-Force volunteers, their assignments and hours
» Document every event with sign-in sheets
» Take photos of events and G-Force members in action

Build relationships with school personnel
» Meet with key staff and teachers
» Introduce yourself to leaders and volunteers in outreach programs
» Explain your role and responsibilities when networking
» Be accessible and visible
» Introduce yourself and the GO Center concept at a staff meeting
» Collaborate with existing programs

Stay connected
» Keep in touch with other GO Centers at both local and state levels
» Periodically contact the College for All Texans Foundation
» Ask about new information on best practices, support and funding
» Connect with Mobile GO Centers to increase collaboration

“G-Force has shaped my life in a very unique way. It teaches responsibility, leadership skills, discipline and most importantly, how to be an inspiration for many students who are barely starting out.”

Perla Gallegos, G-Force member
The G-Force is a network of student volunteers committed to achieving a college-going culture by supporting GO Center efforts. They are an active, supportive and integral part of the GO Center program.

The Role of G-Force Members

G-Force members help drive the desire in other students to go to college. G-Force members help raise awareness of the value of a higher education and thus, help to promote a college-going culture among students and their families. The encouragement and assistance provided by G-Force members is instrumental in motivating students to pursue and explore all the available options for enrolling in college, and also help prepare them academically and financially so that they successfully complete their college and career goals.

The G-Force is a key element of the GO Center and its success. The most successful GO Centers are those that place the students in leadership roles.

Peer Education

Increasing college enrollment rates depends on changing cultural norms. Effective strategies designed to change cultural norms must include the development of a system that uses positive peer pressure. Research has shown that the messenger is often more influential than the message. This is why GO Centers rely heavily on the creation of G-Force peer educators to carry the college-going message to their peers.

Utilizing peer educators solves another challenge. It maximizes the limited resources at the local level. School counselors typically shoulder the majority of the workload when it comes to providing assistance to students interested in pursuing post-secondary education. But many are inundated with other responsibilities and functions in the school system. Having a network of peer educators relieves some of the pressure on school counselors. It allows them to meet the specific needs of more students while the peer educators assist in more general aspects of promoting college awareness and enrollment.
It can be very helpful for G-Force members from different schools to connect with each other to share best practices. High school G-Force members can help mentor middle and elementary school G-Force members. Connecting G-Force members from different school districts can also help improve the work that G-Force members do.

It is important to note that G-Force members are NOT counselors. They are facilitators of the process and provide general information that helps motivate students to act on that information. G-Force members are instrumental in helping other students consider college and get started in the process. They then refer students to the appropriate resource for more challenging issues. When peer mentors are able to answer many of the more general questions, counselors are better able to focus on the difficult issues.

**Recommended Requirements for G-Force Members**

It is recommended that coordinators select students from different grade levels and backgrounds, and if possible, to include a handful of first generation students. Teachers and counselors may also refer students to G-Force. There are some minimal requirements for G-Force members:

⭐ **General G-Force requirements**
   - Pursue recommended curriculum
   - Maintain an 80% grade average once they’ve entered the G-Force
   - Maintain a 95% attendance rate
   - Commit to the creation of a college-going culture

Note: If a G-Force member is having a positive impact on a student but is unable to meet these requirements, the coordinator may waive the G-Force requirements.

⭐ **Collegiate G-Force requirements**

There are more than 60 Texas post-secondary education institutions that have established collegiate G-Force chapters on their campuses. The purpose of these chapters is to serve as a point of coordination and deployment of campus resources that can serve GO Centers in surrounding communities.

Requirements for being a member of a collegiate G-Force vary per institution. To determine the requirements of collegiate G-Force members at any specific institution, contact the G-Force coordinator at that institution.

⭐ **G-Force members should:**
   - Refer students to the GO Center
   - Encourage students to consider college
   - Display a positive attitude about college
   - Maintain confidentiality regarding academic issues
   - Provide mentoring and tutoring to students
» Inform students about colleges, dates and deadlines
» Respect students’ decisions and choices about college
» Remind students of GO Center appointments

★ G-Force members should not:
» Make specific recommendations about colleges or universities
» Discourage students from exploring a variety of options
» Divulge information about other students
» Do any academic work on behalf of another student
» Debate or argue with students about their options
» Fill out any applications on behalf of students

Developing a G-Force

When initiating a GO Center, it is suggested that the school recruit 5 to 10 students to serve as charter members of the G-Force. If this number is too large or small for your school’s needs, adjust the number as needed. The majority of these students will be from a high school and collegiate G-Force.

The process of selecting G-Force members is left to the discretion of the GO Center coordinator. A variety of methods have been used. Some schools simply appoint G-Force members based on recommendations of counselors and/or teachers. Some schools have announced the program to the entire student body or a selected group of students, and invited them to go through an application and interview process. Both of these methods have been successful.

Building a Dynamic G-Force

Before you begin the process of recruiting student volunteers, first inquire about school policies regarding student volunteer participation. Each district and campus may have specific criteria they require, such as background checks, grade point average, parental approval, etc.

Once you are certain about these policies and what you need to do to comply, there are other considerations to take into account. The strength of a successful GO Center depends on the diversity of your team members, their understanding of the role they have as young leaders and peer educators, and their willingness to commit their time to the program.
To build a dynamic G-Force, it is recommended that you:

**Choose from all grade levels**

- Select at least two members from each grade level
- Include older students who can provide mature assistance
- Include younger students to help maintain diversity, continuity and participation

**Choose students from a variety of backgrounds**

- The more diverse your G-Force, the more students you’ll reach
- A variety of personalities, cultures and backgrounds increases your opportunities to address the variety of challenges, concerns and questions that will arise

**Include first generation college students**

- Students who are the first in their immediate family to pursue college will have more insight into the challenges of other first generation college students
- Many are facing these challenges themselves, so their participation will help further their own education goals
- First generation students often have few role models regarding the pursuit of a college education. In volunteering, they serve as role models themselves, which boosts confidence and their chances for success.

**Bringing in Outside Help**

In addition to the G-Force you select from the high school and local institutions of higher education, other volunteers from within the school system and local community will also add to the strength of your GO Center.

**Suggestions for recruiting school system volunteers**

- Advertise in school newspapers
- Put up fliers in local libraries and neighborhood community centers
- Contact after-school care programs
- Talk to teachers and counselors and provide them with fliers
- Contact the PTA, parent liaisons and parent volunteers in other organizations

**Suggestions for recruiting local community volunteers**

- Boys & Girls Clubs
- YMCA/YWCA
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
- Chambers of Commerce and other professional organizations
- Junior League
- Communities In Schools
Suggestions for recruiting Federal volunteers
- AmeriCorps (State, VISTA, and other volunteers) - [www.AmeriCorps.gov](http://www.AmeriCorps.gov)
- Corporation for National and Community Service - [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

Other recruiting tools and resources
- Volunteer Match – [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)
- Volunteers of America – [www.voatx.org](http://www.voatx.org)
- United Way of Texas – [www.uwtexas.org](http://www.uwtexas.org)
- America’s Promise – [www.Americaspromise.org](http://www.Americaspromise.org)
- Serve – [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)

**Garnering Interest in Your GO Center**

After your initial G-Force has been trained and your GO Center is operational, there are steps you can take to increase students’ interest in becoming a G-Force member. The following are some steps you can take to build a larger network and to replace those who graduate.

**Increase the visibility of current G-Force members**
- Create T-shirts for G-Force members to wear at school. Get their input first!
- Take a group picture. Display it in the GO Center and if possible, at school
- Encourage G-Force members to place GO logos on their lockers
- Create hats, buttons or pins with the G-Force logo

**Create benefits for G-Force members**
- Provide them with G-Force membership cards
- Present them with certificates of completion at the end of a school term
- Inquire about honoring their work at community events, breakfasts and meetings
- Ask local merchants for discounts for students with G-Force membership cards
- Encourage a “G-Force Day” at the school

**Be on the lookout for potential G-Force members**
- Ask teachers and school staff for recommendations
- Contact local colleges and other higher education institutions
- Create a G-Force recruitment drive. For example, set up a booth at a local community event, school fair or other special event.
- Offer to speak to civic groups about the GO Center concept and need for volunteers.

**Training Your G-Force**
As the coordinator, you are responsible for ensuring each member of your G-Force is trained prior to launching your GO Center. The training program you design should provide a basic understanding of the GO Center concept and mission, as well as how the G-Force contributes to its success. During training, emphasize the kinds of assistance the G-Force will provide, what they should expect, common questions they will be asked, suggestions for answering these questions and tips on interacting with students.

It is recommended that you set aside half a day for your initial G-Force training session. Some suggestions for your first session:

- Provide fact sheets or notepads and pencils so students can take notes
- Explain the importance of their role in building a college-going culture
- Present them with hypothetical situations so they know what to expect
- Provide common questions they may be asked and suggested responses
- Outline what they should and should not do
- Set aside time to answer any of their questions
- Thank them for their participation and remind them of the role they are taking as young leaders. This will help motivate them and increase their participation
- Consider a snack. Eating together brings people together
- Keep it simple!
Sample Training Itinerary

9:00- 9:30 a.m.  Meet and greet time for G-Force members

9:30-10:15 a.m.  Introduction and general information
- Background of the GO Center and its goals
- Explain the College For Texans Website – www.collegeforalltexans.com
- Provide a general schedule
- Outline the rules (GPA requirements, attendance, confidentiality)
- Explain the responsibilities, do’s and don’ts
- Provide a tour of the GO-Center and location of resources
- Define the G-Force role and how it works to build a college-going culture

10:15-10:30 a.m. Break

10:30-11:15 a.m.  Practice and role play
- Provide a hypothetical situation with coordinator acting as a G-Force member
- Present examples of questions to expect and advice on responses
- Encourage students to break into groups of two
- Have one student play the part of a peer advisor, then reverse the roles
- Walk around and observe, offering advice and direction
- Provide a few minutes for follow-up regarding insights and encouragement

11:15-11:45 a.m.  Create a Mission Statement
- Explain what a mission statement is
- Ask for ideas and input
- Create a draft

11:45-12:00 p.m.  Wrap up
- Answer any questions students may have
- Create a schedule so each student is clear about when they are expected
- Exchange contact information
- Provide final comments
- Thank them for their time and willingness to volunteer

Offer G-Force members the opportunity to ‘shadow’ you or another established G-Force member in their initial work day, and use this tool when bringing in any new G-Force members. It is also recommended that you provide additional training as you feel it necessary throughout the year. You may want to schedule periodic brainstorming sessions to improve on the services you’re providing, address any recurring challenges that are popping up or when you plan to expand.
The Mentoring Process

While each GO Center establishes its own operational process, many schools ask for some basic guidelines regarding mentoring. Based on these requests and input from other GO Centers, the following guidelines are suggested:

When the student arrives

- Greet the student warmly and introduce yourself
- Introduce the student to any G-Force members who may be present
- Have the student sign the GO Center registration form
- Ask the student about the help they are interested in receiving

When meeting with the student

- Briefly explain the goal of the GO Center and the G-Force
- Pull together any materials you feel may be helpful
- Provide printed material or online links to sites that meet their needs
- Introduce the College Checklist (refer to ‘Additional Resources’ section)
- Explain the appropriate tasks the student should take
- Make it clear that you support the student’s goals and interests
- Make it fun!

When determining the appropriate actions that should be taken

- Develop steps the student should take
- Identify tools that will help the student complete these tasks
- Provide the student with guides or resources and explain how they will help

When facilitating the process

- Once you’ve assigned the student tasks, follow up on how they’re doing
- Provide additional assistance when you see it is needed
- Provide referrals to more qualified individuals if warranted

When documenting the process

- Keep good records
- Complete any required documentation of activity
GO Center Calendar Year

The following monthly guideline can help you frame up some of your GO Center activities and keep your center relevant. While this guide is focused on high school students, it can also be very helpful to middle school students and their parents.

September – College Application Month

⭐ Prepare the GO Center for the upcoming year. Make sure it is stocked with resources and other materials (PSAT/SAT/ACT registration forms)
⭐ Check to make sure computers are functioning
⭐ Post information about the application process and early admission deadlines
⭐ Strategize and create a marketing plan and special events for the fall
⭐ Post testing and registration dates and deadlines; stock practice booklets
⭐ Help students explore college and career options online and using catalogs
⭐ Organize college visits
⭐ Post information about local college fairs
⭐ Guide seniors through the College Application Checklist
⭐ Keep this checklist in each senior’s file and review it during each GO Center visit

October

⭐ Schedule parent information sessions
⭐ Assist students in researching scholarships and financial aid
⭐ Use the College Application Checklist in every visit
⭐ Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation with juniors and seniors
⭐ Continue career exploration with freshmen and sophomores

November

⭐ Bring in outside speakers who can inspire and motivate
⭐ Schedule field trips
⭐ Focus on career development
⭐ Help students explore colleges, admission requirements and financial aid
⭐ Continue assisting students in college and scholarship research
⭐ Continue focusing on SAT/ACT registration and preparation for older students and career exploration among younger students

December/January

⭐ Gather the data you’ve collected over the fall semester, update your records
⭐ Follow up with students and assist in renewing their interest in college
⭐ Provide community service opportunities
⭐ Review scholarship and financial aid information with students
⭐ Continue focusing on test dates, registration and preparation
⭐ Restock the GO Center for the spring semester
⭐ Create a new marketing plan for the spring semester
⭐ Develop a marketing plan that focuses on financial aid to be used in February
⭐ Have students register for a FAFSA PIN (Personal Identification Number)
February – Financial Aid Month
- Assist seniors with FAFSA applications online, but have them complete a hard copy first to take home
- Encourage seniors to research other financial aid programs and scholarships
- Host a “Financial Aid Saturday” – or more than one, if possible
- Check to make sure seniors have taken the SAT/ACT
- Encourage seniors to identify and submit application to three colleges
- Continue guiding seniors through the College Application Checklist

March/April
- Continue encouraging seniors to complete college applications and FAFSA forms
- Encourage them to submit copies of any letters of acceptance to keep on file and to display in the GO Center (with their permission)
- Provide continuing support to junior and seniors as they choose colleges
- Continue career exploration with freshmen and sophomores

May
- Plan and host end-of-year recognition ceremonies
- Brainstorm for upcoming year with input from G-Force
- Continue supporting seniors regarding their choices for after-graduation
- Continue career exploration with younger students
- Create an evaluation of your program using your records and experience

“G-Force is a great organization and its members have been there to help me in both moral and financial ways. It really is a great sensation to know that you are helping someone realize their dreams. As much as it is good to be helped, it also feels good to help.”

Victor Chico, G-Force member
Fundraising is a win-win prospect. When you raise funds for your GO Center, you also raise awareness about what it is and how it benefits the community. Fundraisers also provide opportunities for students, parents, teachers and others in the community to come together with a common purpose. In doing so, they contribute to the mission of the GO Center and take part in building a college-going culture.

You may have your own ideas about the kind of fundraisers you’d like to host or you may want to talk to others who have organized them in the past. Whatever you choose to host, be creative and be smart.

**Do**
- Follow school policies and procedures and contact the school board for approval
- Host fundraisers that are appealing to students and parents alike
- Get input from your G-Force, the school, parents and those in your community
- Set goals for what you hope to raise and let those goals be known
- Involve as many people as you can
- Have one or two annual fundraisers and a few smaller ones through the year
- Send thank you notes to all those who contributed to the fundraiser’s success
- Keep the ‘fun’ in fundraising!

**Don’t**
- Be shy about asking for help, prizes and donations
- Forget to provide prizes to students who raise the most or work the hardest
- Ask the same people for help at every fundraiser. Diversity counts when you’re looking for donations

**Some suggestions for fundraisers:**

- **Video game tournament** – Encourage students to bring their gaming consoles (Wii, Xbox, Playstation) to play during a free period or after school. You can host tournaments that require a small fee to participate and give prizes to winners. Ask local merchants for prize donations.

- **Bake sale** – Tried and true, bake sales continue to serve as school fundraising staples because they are simple and kids like to eat. Bake sales can include home baked or commercial baked goods displayed in high traffic areas of the school. They can be sold before, after and between classes.
Car wash – Weather permitting, car washes are a good way to increase visibility and participation. Ask around your community for permission to set up a car wash in a busy location. In advance, find out about the water supply and have your team bring supplies. Use signs and banners to promote your car wash.

Art auction – Auction items can include paintings, sculptures, photos or jewelry made by students. Silent auctions allow patrons to bid throughout the day. Also consider an evening event for parents who work.

Sponsorship – Ask local businesses and merchants if they would be willing to sponsor the GO Center. When looking for sponsorship, it is generally best to make your initial contact in writing. Your letter soliciting sponsorship support should include an explanation about the GO Center and its mission. Be specific about how they can help you and how sponsorship would also benefit their business. Ask if you can meet in person, then follow up the letter with a phone call or email.

Other Funding Sources

In addition to holding local fundraisers, you may also want to consider applying for state and Federal grants. Youth Service America partners with many companies and organizations that award grants (State Farm, Disney, United Healthcare, Capital One). AmeriCorps also offers grants, program sponsorship and additional funding.

To learn more, check out the following organizations:

- Youth Service of America - www.ysa.org
- AmeriCorps - www.americorps.gov
- Texas Education Agency - www.tea.state.tx.us
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board - www.thecb.state.tx.us
- Department of Education - www.ed.gov
Much of your GO Center’s success will depend on your outreach program. An effective outreach program is one designed to educate students and their families about the importance of going to college and the opportunities and credentials students can obtain by doing so.

The responsibility for planning and implementing GO Center activities should not fall solely on the shoulders of the coordinator. An active and involved G-Force is essential, as is the involvement of parents, educators and members of the community. Each has a role in informing, inspiring and encouraging young people to realize the impact higher education will have on their success as adults.

The GO Center should provide several outreach programs.

**Parental Outreach**

Research has shown that parental involvement greatly influences students’ aspirations about college. Your GO Center’s parental outreach program can provide a powerful message to parents about their role in supporting and motivating their children to pursue college goals. Your program should include strategies to emphasize these messages while providing tools that will help them help their children plan and prepare for college.

Some suggestions for addressing greater parental involvement.

- Invite parents to events that promote a college-going culture
- Host ‘parent-only’ meetings to discuss ways they can contribute to their child’s education
- Provide methods they can use at home to improve their child’s education
- Make financial and academic planning resources available (see the Additional Resources section of this toolkit)
- Develop FAQs for parents that address common questions and concerns
- Connect parents with collegiate G-Force members who can share their stories
- Offer your availability to answer questions or provide more information
General Outreach

There are plenty of reasons behind the numbers when it comes to low college enrollment. Some of the primary reasons include lack of encouragement, misperceptions about the application process and the cost of college.

Your outreach program can address these challenges through activities that provide parent/child interaction through events tailored to build a college going culture. Outreach efforts should drive home the message that college can be more than a possibility. It can be a reality.

Some suggested outreach strategies:

- Play college videos over the campus television system between classes
- Hang college posters around your school building
- Promote ‘College Night’ on your campus
- Organize field trips to college fairs and local colleges
- Hold ‘Financial Aid Awareness Night’ in February to assist parents and students with FAFSA forms
- Discuss different colleges and higher education options
- Bring in representatives from local colleges on College Fridays
- Host a career speaker series so students can hear from representatives in various career fields (doctors, lawyers, nurses)
- Connect students with current college students
- Connect with other Centers and ask for their participation at events

Put Out the Welcome Mat

A great way to generate interest in your GO Center is to invite people to visit. A little creative strategy can send the message that the GO Center is an inviting and interesting place of learning. To get started, consider talking to school department heads to discuss ways you can work together to get the student community more connected with the GO Center.

Some ideas for connecting students with the GO Center around the state:

- Ask teachers to assign reports or projects that require a visit to the GO Center. For example, English teachers can assign college-related essays, Math teachers can assign a comparative analysis of college expenses (tuition, fees, room and board) between different schools, and computer teachers can assign a virtual scavenger hunt for college and financial aid information.
- Suggest faculty members assign students to visit the GO Center to complete an online career interest survey and report back on a career of interest
- Forge greater connections with faculty members by meeting them individually
- Offer to visit classrooms to talk to students about their career goals and interests
Niche Marketing

Continue to find ways to market the GO Center throughout the year with creative activities. For example, one school chose to spice up their ‘Financial Aid Awareness Night’ with a “Hip Hop into College” night. Students participated in a talent show and cleverly threw in information about financial aid for parents and students in the audience. Local businesses donated prizes for the winning act.

Your marketing efforts might include:

⭐ Presentations at faculty meetings that include handouts and students sharing stories about the work they do at the GO Center.
⭐ Create ways to get parents on campus
⭐ Connect with booster clubs and offer to speak about the GO Center and the need to encourage kids to go to college
⭐ Think food – a natural magnet for attendance!

GO Center Support

Connect with various school groups and offer the GO Center as a meeting place or work space to meet with students. Offer to work together on special events to help each other succeed.

Suggestions for groups to contact:

⭐ GEAR UP - (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) www.ed.gov/programs/gearup
⭐ Talent Search - www.ed.gov/programs/triotalent
⭐ Upward Bound - www.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound
⭐ Communities In Schools – www.cisnet.org
⭐ Project Stay – www.projectstay.org
⭐ Project Grad – www.projectgrad.org
⭐ AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) www.avidonline.org

Local Outreach Projects

Your local outreach projects can be as simple or involved as you wish. The bottom line is to create programs that are both effective and within your ability to implement. As you strategize, use your G-Force, your community and your imagination.
The following are a few examples of innovative GO Center outreach projects that have been successfully implemented:

- **GO Flag** – Make a large flag with the GO logo and tagline printed on it. When the football team scores, G-Force members run across the field with the flag.

- **Reality Store** – A reality store gives students insight into the finances associated with living in the real world. It teaches them more about the level of education and income that will be required to live the lifestyles they desire.

- **G-Force Assembly** – Conduct a school assembly to promote the GO Center. Have the G-Force perform skits or make presentations that focus on higher education and financial aid.

- **Career Fair** – Several schools with GO Centers in the same area combined forces to add a GO Center to the regional career fair. A GO Center with 20 donated computers was set up for students interested in conducting career explorations. Participating students entered their names in a drawing. Each hour, a drawing was held and a computer was given away.

- **GO Corners** – Many schools have created GO Corners in their classrooms. A GO Corner contains information on college, FAFSA forms, ACT/SAT exams, etc.

- **GO Hallways** – A school turned a hallway into an extension of the GO Center. Huge college flags were hung from the ceiling, low enough to literally ‘hit students on the head’ with college messages as they walked the hallway. In one high traffic area, a television ran continuous loops of college recruiting videos.

- **College Fridays and College Nights** – These are useful in generating college awareness. They can include speakers from local colleges and professionals in a variety of career fields who discuss financial aid. Resources for parents can also be made available.

- **Financial Aid Awareness Night** – Schedule a financial aid representative to speak to parents about financial aid and scholarships, and assist them with FAFSA forms.

- **PSAT/SAT Prep** – Schedule a time to be available to answer questions and provide a general overview of test information. Have prep guides available.
“Education – GO Get it” Week

“Education – GO Get It” Week is designed to emphasize the importance of higher education to all students at all grade levels. Some schools kick off the week with a rally, decorate the halls with college pennants and create other school activities.

The following is a sample schedule of events for this week-long outreach program:

- **Monday** - “High School Days” - Staff and students are encouraged to wear school T-shirts, hats and colors to promote school spirit and celebrate the week. Be accessible to students and take time to explain the programs and activities of the GO Center and its mission. Students in elementary and middle school can be encouraged to wear clothing representative of the local high school or schools of their parents, siblings or neighbors. Ask if you can share information about the GO Center to classes and invite staff members to speak as well.

- **Tuesday** - “Show Your College Spirit” - Staff members are encouraged to wear their college T-shirts and colors and take time to share their college experiences, including information about scholarships, financial aid, college credit, etc. Students are also encouraged to wear college clothing and talk about their college dreams with teachers.

- **Wednesday** - “Your Future Is So Bright” – Staff and students wear sunglasses to indicate their futures are so bright with education they’ve got to wear shades! Use sunglasses or artwork displaying the sun as props in classrooms. Discuss long and short term education goals.

- **Thursday** – “Education Puts You in the Driver’s Seat” – Staff and students bring photos or posters of their favorite cars and talk about how education ‘transports’ you where you want to go!

- **Friday** – “Career Day” - Staff and Students dress as they would as professionals in careers or in clothing representative of the fields in which they are interested. Discuss these interests in class and how education can lead to them.

“Assisting in Go Centers has helped me value myself as a person who can help others and bring a smile to a person’s face.”

Yasmin Castro, G-Force member
Keep track of the work and activities of your GO Center. This is crucial when planning future events and evaluating and improving your program. It can also be helpful when training your G-Force.

**GO Center Sign-In Sheets**

Sign-in sheets provide you with a clear record of who is volunteering, when they’re participating and from which grade levels. It also indicates this same information for those receiving assistance. Sample sign-in sheets are provided at the end of this toolkit. However, you may add additional criteria if you feel it relevant. This record will help you track and evaluate the effectiveness of your program.

- Keep the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil posted in a designated location
- Make it a rule that all students sign-in
- Consider posting a reminder (Do Not Pass the GO Center – Sign in First!)

**Event Sign-in Sheets**

Sign-in sheets should also be provided for any presentations or events you host and are helpful in determining what events are most popular and which groups or students are participating.

- Provide a sign-in sheet for each presentation or event
- Put the title of the event at the top
- Include names of G-Force members and other event details

**General Presentation Evaluations**

Evaluation forms can assist you in evaluating your presentations and events. A sample evaluation form is provided at the end of this toolkit. It can be modified to reflect specific criteria for which you’re looking and to address specific programs and age groups.

- Distribute evaluation forms following your presentations
- Attach completed forms to sign-in sheets and file them together

**College Application Checklist**

The checklist is intended to help students track their college application process. A sample is included at the end of this toolkit.

- Provide seniors with a copy during each visit they make to the CO Center
- Assist them in checking off completed items as they work through it
# GO Center Sign-in Sheet

**School Name:** ____________________  **Date:** ____________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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# G-Force Member Information Sheet

**Name of School:** _____________________  
**Today’s Date:** ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G-Force Member’s Name</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Officer/Title/Position</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
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Presentation/Event Sign-in Sheet

School: ______________________________________________________
Event: ______________________________________________________
Date: ______________________________________________________
Time: ______________________________________________________
G-Force Members: ______________________________________________

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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General Presentation Evaluation Form

Title: ______________________

School: ______________________

Presenters: ________________________

Date: _____________

PLEASE MARK AN “X” BY THE NUMBER THAT BEST EXPRESSES YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

Excellent: 4  |  Good: 3  |  Satisfactory: 2  |  Unsatisfactory: 1

Do you feel the material was presented in a clear and concise manner?

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Rate the relevance of information:

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Rate the opportunity to participate/ask questions:

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Rate of overall presentation:

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1—Unsatisfactory

Things I liked:

Things I disliked:

How can we improve the presentation?
# College Application Checklist

*Keep track of your applications*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Applications</strong></th>
<th>College 1</th>
<th>College 2</th>
<th>College 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request info/applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular application deadline</td>
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<td>Early application deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing information and applications</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Grades</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request high school transcript sent</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Test</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT I/ACT required</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT II required (if needed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send SAT/ACT scores</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send AP scores</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Letters of recommendation</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request recommendations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Send thank you notes</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Essays</strong></th>
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<td>Write essays</td>
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<td>Proof essays for spelling and grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have two people read your essays</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Send and track your applications</strong></th>
<th>College 1</th>
<th>College 2</th>
<th>College 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make copies of all application materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply online (if possible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include application fee</td>
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<td>Sign application</td>
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<td>Mail via certified mail</td>
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<td>Confirm receipt of application materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send supplemental material, if needed</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Financial aid forms</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Priority financial aid deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular financial aid deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mail FAFSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mail institutional aid form, if needed</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>After you send in your application</strong></th>
<th>College 1</th>
<th>College 2</th>
<th>College 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive admission letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receive financial aid award letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send deposit, enrollment and housing, if necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good luck!</td>
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*Adapted from: collegeboard.com, Inc. and its licensors*
This section includes a wealth of resources for use in your GO Center. You are encouraged to explore other resources from education sources as well, to increase the effectiveness of your GO Center.

### Web Resources for GO Centers

- [www.collegeforalltexans.com](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com) - information on admissions/financial aid in Texas
- [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) - Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- [www.tgslc.org](http://www.tgslc.org) - Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TGSLC)
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) - information regarding the SAT
- [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) - information regarding the ACT
- [www.thea.nesinc.com](http://www.thea.nesinc.com) - information on THEA, the placement test used by community colleges

### Web Resources for Parents

- [www.collegeforalltexans.com](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com) - information on admissions/financial aid in Texas
- [www.collegeispossible.org](http://www.collegeispossible.org) - information on ways parents can prepare students
- [www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com) - for information regarding educational skills expected for each grade and skill-builder exercises parents can do with their students
- [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) - for information about paying and preparing for college
- [www.ed.gov/parents](http://www.ed.gov/parents) - information regarding a variety of support parents can give and receive in helping their students attend college
- [www.texastomorrowfunds.org](http://www.texastomorrowfunds.org) - information on Texas college savings plans
- [www.nasfaa.org](http://www.nasfaa.org) – financial aid information
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) - free scholarship and financial aid service
- [www.aie.org/Parents](http://www.aie.org/Parents) - information for helping parents help students prepare for college

### Web Resources for Students

- [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org) - online application to public universities and community colleges in Texas, including Baylor University
- [www.utexas.edu/world/univ](http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ) - list of accredited higher education institutions
- [www.unt.edu/pais/howtochoose](http://www.unt.edu/pais/howtochoose) - how to choose a college that is right for you
- [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) - college entrance test preps, rates and reviews
- [www.collegedata.com](http://www.collegedata.com) - predicts a student’s chance of getting into the schools they want and explains how to enhance college applications
www.lmci.state.tx.us/realitycheck - explains what you need to earn to live the lifestyle you want
www.fastweb.com – free scholarship and financial aid matching service
www.driveofyourlife.org – online career exploration for middle and high school students
www.studentaid.ed.gov - federal student aid information center
www.petersons.com - scholarship search and other resources
www.aie.org - help in planning and completing higher education
www.going2college.org - help in planning for college, career options, how to locate financial aid sources
www.mappingyourfuture.org - information on preparing and paying for college
www.knowhow2go.org - provides steps for getting into college
www.careervoyages.gov - information on a variety of different jobs
www.fafsa.ed.gov - free application that determines eligibility for federal student aid
http://www.pin.ed.gov - get your PIN ahead of time for you and for one of your parents in order to sign the FAFSA electronically
www.collegeboard.com - list of best value colleges, financial aid, easy planner, financial aid calendar for high school students
www.finaid.org - financial aid estimation and EFC calculator
www.finaidfacts.org - facts about financial aid
www.financialaidnews.com - the latest news about financial aid
What is a GO Center?

GO Centers provide resources, information and individuals to help students and parents better prepare and plan for college. They serve as a point of coordination between students, P-12 counselors, and institutions of higher education. Most are located on school campuses, although there are satellite and Mobile GO Centers as well. GO Centers incorporate student volunteers from middle school, high school and colleges to serve as the G-Force and assist students explore and find information about going to college. GO Centers help spread the word about college opportunities and encourage students to consider higher education after high school graduation.

Who can go to a GO Center?

Anyone! The GO Center is primarily intended for students, but each GO Center is equipped with information to help parents and teachers build a college going culture. Parents can learn about financial aid, how to prepare their child for college, and the tools available for their children. Teachers can learn how to encourage their students to go to college. Students at all grade level can learn about careers and college preparation and receive assistance in this process from trained G-Force members.

What is the G-Force?

G-Force is a network of students/volunteers committed to building a college-going culture. Any GO Center volunteer is a G-Force member. Most are high school students but collegiate G-Force groups, parents and community volunteers may also be part of the G-Force. The focus of the G-Force is to help motivate students to go to college. Working individually with students and using activities and outreach programs, the G-Force raises awareness among students and their families of the value of a higher education and help them prepare for college academically and financially.

Do all GO Center activities take place at the GO Center?

No. G-Force members are encouraged to be involved in events and presentations at the GO Center, at school and throughout their communities. Events and presentations can be conducted in cafeterias, auditoriums, classrooms and outside locations. Many GO Centers organize field trips to college campuses, career fairs and other locations and events designed to help students prepare for college.
How can I become a member of the G-Force?

Interested G-Force applicants should contact the GO Center coordinator to learn more about the requirements and responsibilities. In addition to meeting established criteria, G-Force members should also demonstrate confidence and a willingness to help students pursue college.

What are the general G-Force requirements?

★ Pursue recommended curriculum
★ Maintain an 80% grade average once they become a G-Force member
★ Maintain a 95% attendance rate
★ Commit to helping create a college-going culture
ACT (American College Testing Program): a standardized test that measures educational development and readiness to pursue college-level English, mathematics, natural science, and social studies

Admissions counselor: a college or university employee responsible for decisions about which student applicants will be admitted to their school

AmeriCorps: a federal government program representing more than 2 million members engaged in community service

Associate degree: a degree generally requiring two college years or 60 college credits

Auditory learner: a person who learns best by hearing rather than reading or doing

Bachelor’s degree: a degree generally requiring 4 college years or 120 or more college credits

Career: an occupation or profession requiring special training

Certification: an award presented by a certifying body indicating that all the requirements of an education or training program have been met and completed

Collegiate G-Force: G-Force members who are also college students and are working with GO Centers

Community college: a two-year post secondary institution offering associate degree programs and courses for transfer to a four-year college or university

Degree: a certificate granted by an accredited board, agency or institution indicating satisfactory completion of the academic and other requirements of a program of study

Doctoral degree (Ph.D): the highest academic award a student can earn for graduate study. Prerequisites generally include a bachelor’s and master’s degree and additional years of study and research.

Extracurricular activities: any event, team, club, or organized activity in which a student participates outside of academic coursework
**FAFSA**: Free Application for Federal Student Aid designed to determine a student’s eligibility for financial assistance in the form of grants, loans, and work-study credits

**Financial aid**: financial assistance for students pursuing post-secondary education

**First-generation college student**: any student who is the first in their immediate family (e.g., parents, siblings) pursuing a college degree

**Four-year college/university**: an accredited institution through which students can pursue bachelors and/or master’s degrees

**G-Force**: a network of students/volunteers committed to building a college-going culture through participation in GO Center efforts

**GO Center**: Centers designed to serve as a point of coordination between students, P-12 counselors, parents and institutions of higher education, with the primary goal of informing and encouraging students to prepare, plan, pay and apply for college

**Grade point average** (GPA): the measure of scholastic achievement computed by dividing the total number of grade points by the total number of credits or coursework

**Grant**: financial aid award that does not have to be repaid

**License**: formal permission granted by an authorized entity to perform a job or service

**Loan**: financial aid award that must be repaid on the lending agency’s terms (interest rate, deadlines, etc.)

**Major**: a subject or field of study chosen by a student to represent his/her principal interest and upon which a large share of efforts and courses are concentrated

**Mission statement**: a short, clear statement describing the GO Center purpose

**Mobile GO Centers**: GO Centers housed in mobile units outfitted with computers, printers, Internet connectivity and printed resources used to travel to traditional and non-traditional settings such as parking lots and special events

**PLAN**: standardized exam designed to determine students’ abilities in math, science reasoning, English and reading to determine readiness for the ACT exam

**PSAT**: preliminary SAT standardized exam that tests students’ abilities in math, critical reading and writing, used to determine readiness for the SAT exam
**SAT**: Scholastic Assessment Test generally required for college admission and designed to demonstrate students’ math, critical reading and writing skills to determine readiness for college-level coursework

**Satellite GO Centers** – GO Centers located in non-educational settings such as public libraries, local workforce centers, or community centers

**Scholarship**: financial aid award based on differing criteria that does not have to be repaid.

**Sponsor**: An individual, group or business providing direct support and assistance to G-Force members and dedicated to promoting the college-going message

**Standardized test**: a test used to assess students’ preparation and academic qualifications, such as the ACT or SAT

**Tactile learner**: a person who learns best by doing rather than seeing or hearing

**Technical college**: a facility offering post secondary training and/or certification in technical and vocational fields

**Transcript**: An official record of student performance, completed coursework and other evaluations

**Visual learner**: a person who learns best by seeing rather than doing or hearing

**Work-study**: a need-based federal program providing jobs to eligible students on campus or in the community
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Your name
Date
Area code/phone number
Email

Title of your Release (For example: Winston Churchill High School Launches GO Center)

YOUR CITY – Use this paragraph to explain the nature of your event, where it will be held, address, start time. Include any interesting fact that will draw people to the event.

Use the second paragraph to highlight any additional specifics about your event that you want the public to know. Provide a quote if you think it will serve to draw more visitors and participation. Mention any sponsors who will be there to highlight the support you currently have.

Use the third paragraph to explain what the GO Center is all about, what it will provide students and families, and how community participation is welcomed and needed.

For more information: Provide all contact information again.

About GO Centers

Using smaller, italicized font, define a short graph about GO Centers in your community. End this section with your mission statement. (Please advise regarding whether you want them to incorporate the www.collegeforalltexans.com website or other online site)
MEDIA ADVISORY
Date

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE/CONTACT: (Insert contact name)
(Date, cell number, email address)

WHAT: (Name of your event) For example, a GO Center launch would include a brief explanation of what the GO Center is doing at the event and the purpose of the event. Add details of anything taking place during the event to draw interest.

WHEN: (Day and date of event)
(start time and end time, such as 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.)

WHERE: (location name)
(exact street address, city, state)

WHO: Include names of participants, speakers and special guests

WHY: Briefly explain what the GO Center is and why you are having this event.

Note: Always provide members of the media with a cell phone contact. Reporters may try to call for directions or ask if the event is still in progress. They’ll need to reach those who are on site.

About GO Centers
Using smaller, italicized font, define a short graph about GO Centers in your community. End this section with your mission statement. (Please advise regarding whether you want them to incorporate the www.collegeforalltexans.com website or other online site)
Future Facts

Degrees Make a Difference!

⭐ College graduates with a bachelor’s degree earn 60 percent more than those who have obtained a high school diploma.

⭐ On average, workers with a bachelor’s degree earn $52,200 per year; workers with an associate’s degree earn $38,200 per year; workers with a high school diploma earn $27,915 per year.

⭐ Over the course of their lives, workers with bachelor’s degrees earn about $2.1 million; workers with associate’s degrees earn $1.6 million; workers with high school diplomas earn $1.2 million.

⭐ College graduates typically have more money in their savings accounts.

⭐ College graduates typically have more time to spend on hobbies and fun.

⭐ College graduates tend to have more job security.

⭐ College graduates have more opportunities to get jobs in other cities.

⭐ College graduates and their children tend to have better health.

⭐ A higher percentage of college graduates have children who also earn degrees.

⭐ Workers with an associate’s degree earn 25 percent more than workers doing the same job without a degree.

⭐ Women with college degrees tend to spend more time with their children.

⭐ Women with college degrees tend to be more optimistic about the future and have fewer regrets about the past.

(Statistics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and Center for Higher Education Policy)
Financial Aid - Fact and Fiction

Fiction: All colleges are expensive.
Fact: The cost of colleges varies greatly. The current average cost for 2008-2009 for in-state tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities is $6,585. The average cost of two-year colleges is $2,402. About a third of all full time students enrolled in public four-year schools pay less than $6,000 for tuition and fees.

Fiction: There’s no way I can pay for college even at a less expensive school.
Fact: On average, full time students receive grants and tax benefits of $3,700 in public four-year colleges and $2,300 in public two-year colleges.

Fiction: College is not worth the money.
Fact: College graduates earn an average of $800,000 more over the course of their careers than high-school graduates.

Fiction: Millions of dollars in scholarships are available for use every year.
Fact: Private scholarships make up a very small segment (only about 7 percent) of the total number of dollars available for college. Federal, state and school financial aid makes up the larger amount of available funding to cover the cost of college.

Fiction: There’s not a lot of financial aid available.
Fact: More than $143 billion in student financial aid is available, most of it through low-interest loans and grants.

Fiction: I’ll be looked at differently if I receive financial aid.
Fact: More than half of all college students (55 percent) receive some financial aid.

Fiction: I’m not a straight A student so I won’t get any financial aid.
Fact: Most financial aid is awarded based on need rather than grade point average.

Fiction: Private colleges are out of reach for my family.
Fact: Experts recommend students consider cost as only one factor when choosing a college. Look at academic programs, career preparation and personal needs as well. In many cases, students qualify for more financial aid at private schools. On average, full times students at private four-year schools receive $10,200 in grants and tax benefits.

(Sources: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; Collegeboard.com; U.S. Census Bureau)
# Financial Aid Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>Financial Aid Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Financial aid awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal:</strong> To increase</td>
<td>Students will be introduced to financial aid terms and will play word games to match terms with their definitions to learn their meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge of financial aid, career opportunities and the benefits of college</td>
<td>Students will also review Financial Aid – Fact and Fiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>High school and middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of attendees</strong></td>
<td>15 to 30 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space required</strong></td>
<td>One classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources (such as computers, handouts, projector, etc.)</strong></td>
<td>Financial Aid Terms Worksheet, Financial Aid – Fact and Fiction Worksheet, Financial Aid Word Match Game Worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time commitment</strong></td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step by step explanation of the activity</strong> (rules, guidelines and other necessary elements)</td>
<td>Explain the different types of financial aid available using the Financial Aid Worksheet. Hand out the Financial Aid – Fact and Fiction Worksheet for review. Give the students the Financial Aid Word Match Game Worksheet to assess what they have learned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Aid Terms

**Appeal:** A request for review and reconsideration of the financial aid package a student has or has not been awarded.

**Award letter:** A document detailing the financial aid package a student will receive.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The total amount students and families are expected to pay toward college costs computed on an annual basis and determined by need, family income, assets and overall financial circumstances.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The total amount students and families are expected to pay toward college costs computed on an annual basis and determined by need, family income, assets and overall financial circumstances.

**FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

**Grant:** Financial aid award that does not have to be repaid and is based on criteria such as demographics, special talent, need, athletics, life experiences or any other factor as determined by the granting institution.

**Loan:** Financial aid awarded on the condition that it is borrowed and must be repaid.

**Scholarship:** Financial aid award that does not have to be repaid and is based on factors such as academic achievement, need, culture and any other criteria as determined by the scholarship granting institution.

**Work study:** Federally sponsored financial aid program in which the government pays a portion of the wages earned by an employed student.
Word Match Game

Match the words below to their corresponding definitions

FAFSA _____
Expected Family Contribution (EFC) _____
Scholarship _____
Grant _____
Loan _____
Work study _____
Award letter _____
Appeal _____

A. Free Application for Federal Student Aid that may be submitted online or on paper
B. Financial award that does not have to be repaid and is based on factors as determined by the awarding institution, such as academic achievement, need, culture and other criteria
C. A student’s request for review and reconsideration of a financial aid package that has been awarded
D. Financial aid awarded on the condition that it is borrowed and must be repaid
E. A document detailing the financial aid package a student will receive
F. The total amount students and families are expected to pay toward college costs and determined on an annual basis through an analysis of income, assets, need and overall financial circumstances
G. Financial aid award that does not have to be repaid and is based on criteria such as demographics, special talent, need, athletics, life experience equal to college credit and other factors
H. Federally sponsored financial aid program in which the government pays a portion of the wages earned by a student in part time employment
## Know How To GO Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of activity</th>
<th>Know-How-To-Go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Higher education awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong> – to increase knowledge about preparing and planning for college, the financial aid available and the career benefits of going to college</td>
<td>Increase knowledge about how to prepare for college; increase awareness of the university culture and geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>4th and fifth grade students, middle school, High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of attendees</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of space required</strong></td>
<td>Computer Lab; 25 computers available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources (computer, handouts, projector, etc.)</strong></td>
<td>Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website:</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.knowhow2go.org">www.knowhow2go.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time commitment</strong></td>
<td>35 minutes in GO Center; 25 minutes in classroom presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step-by-step explanation of the activity (rules, guidelines, other necessary elements)</strong></td>
<td>Prepare a 25 minute presentation for students on the steps they can take to prepare and plan for college. Students proceed to the GO Center where they will use computers and visit: <a href="http://www.knowhow2go.org">www.knowhow2go.org</a>. Explain that they will take a university virtual tour to learn more about the different kinds of college options they have. Outline the computer lab rules before getting started:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Respect the equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Listen carefully for instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. No eating or drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Raise your hand for assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Real Life 101 Budget Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of activity</th>
<th>Real Life 101 Budget Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Career Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal (to increase knowledge of living on a budget and counting costs in real terms) Additional benefits include learning how careers benefit earning potential and how finding available financial aid increases the opportunity to enroll and succeed in college</td>
<td>Students will learn to make the most of their money, do some cost comparisons, and learn how to budget their money with real values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Middle and high school students and others who can benefit from this exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendees</td>
<td>15 to 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of space required</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (computer, handouts, projector)</td>
<td>Fake money, Real Life 101 Budget Worksheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time commitment</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-by-step explanation of the activity, such as rules, guidelines or other necessary elements</td>
<td>Make up sheets of fake money to give to students. Handout the Real Life Budget Worksheets. Students should then pick out different items they want to purchase and discuss costs and the earnings required to purchase such items.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Real Life 101 Budget Activity

Please choose only one of the following:
*Payment for a 5 year plan at 6.17% interest

New Auto
☐ Lexus/Hummer- $1020/month
☐ Nissan Xterra - $470/month
☐ Ford Focus Sedan - $310/month

Used Auto
☐ Chevy Malibu, 1998 - $160/month

Please choose one or more of the following:

TV – 32” (Total Price = $400)
$39.33/month

i-Pod Nano 8G (Total Price = $149)
$12.42/month

Kitchen Equipment—pots, pans, tableware
(Total Price = $210.00) $20.65/month

Vacuum Cleaner (Total Price = $150.00)
$14.75/month

Please choose one of the following:
*Prices for one pair of denim jeans and shirt

☐ Hollister/Abercrombie & Fitch/
☐ American Eagle $75
☐ Kohl’s/TJ Maxx $40
☐ Wal-Mart/Target $25

Please choose one or more of the following:

Movie Theatre (1 show & refreshment for 1 person) $20

X-box games or Playstation games
(2 items) $30

DVDs (2 items) $40

CD’s (2 items) $26

Please choose one or more of the following:
*Prices based on 18% interest and 1 year payment plan

X-Box Game System
(Total Price = $200) $16.67/month

Playstation Game System
(Total Price = $300) $25/month

Furniture—living room set
(Total Price = $1250) $25/month

X-Box Game System
(Total Price = $200) $16.67/month

Laptop (Total Price = $2000) $196.67/month

Please choose one or more of the following:

Telephone (basic service) $35/month

Telephone (with caller ID, call waiting) $52/month

Cell phone (with unlimited texting) $60/month

Internet (dial-up) $24/month

Internet (DSL/cable) $40/month

Satellite/cable TV $50/month

Please choose one of the following:

Salon (pedicure/manicure) $28

Haircut $10

Make-up $42

Skin care/shaving $25

Perfume/cologne $53

Gym membership $25/month

Please choose one or more of the following:

Eating In (Groceries) $300/month

Combo (Groceries & Fast Food) $410/month

Luxury (Sit-down restaurants) $600.00/month

Fast food = McDonald’s, Taco Cabana, Peter Piper Pizza, etc.
Sit-down = Olive Garden, Chili’s, Cheddar’s, etc.

Please choose one of the following:

Economy Apartment, (Unfurnished, 1 bdr) $450/month

House (3 bdr, 2 bath, double garage) $800/month

House (3 bdr, 2 bath, double garage) $800/month

House (4 bdr, 3 bath, dble. Garage, den) $1200/month
Acknowledgements

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
A.W. “Whit” Riter III, Chair
Fred W. Heldenfels IV, Vice-Chair
Lyn Phillips
Elaine Mendoza
Heather A. Morris, Student Representative

Laurie Bricker
Joe B. Hinton
Brenda Pejovich
Robert V. Wingo

Raymund Paredes
Commissioner

David Gardner
Deputy Commissioner, Academic Planning and Policy

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Assistant Commissioner, P-16 Initiatives

P-16 Outreach Staff
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Pamela Rogers, Program Director
Chris Alvarado, Director
Dewy Brooks, Program Director
Kimberly Christian, Program Director
Matt Lashlee, Vista Coordinator
Priscilla Martinez, Program Director
Celeste Padilla, Program Director

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