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Introduction to this Guide

This planning guide is created for community members who want to put together Generation TX Month events. This guide was designed especially for campaign partners, regional P-16 Councils, and counselors and advisers at middle schools and high schools who wish to plan Generation TX Month events and promotions. Please use this guide as a reference and foundation for your efforts, and if you have any questions, contact us at info@gentx.org.

Community and individual efforts surrounding Generation TX are what keep us inspired. That's why it is important to share your outstanding efforts. Please let us know if your community plans Generation TX Month events, so we can spread the news and share ideas with others. Just send us an email at info@gentx.org telling us about yourself and how you are going to help students or connect with us via Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram.

Thanks for doing your part in helping to build a strong, united Generation TX, and especially for getting students focused on their future and taking the next steps on their college and career path!
Introduction to Generation TX

College Is What’s Next.

All across Texas, students are finding their voices, setting goals, and taking steps towards securing their own successful futures. Through these efforts, they become an integral part of a growing movement known as Generation TX. These students are what’s next for our state. They have the power to become the most successful generation ever.

What is Generation TX Month?

Generation TX Month combines college admissions and financial aid application efforts into one. Generation TX Month events are designed to take place when schools and community organizations typically host college fairs, financial aid drives, and other college and career-related events. The Generation TX Month provides the perfect opportunity to build on these initiatives around college and career readiness, pull them together to make a broader impact, and expand their reach.

Generation TX Month focuses on getting students, especially those in middle school and high school, thinking about their future with a range of actions and next steps that they can take toward college and career readiness, including:

Prepare (Middle & High School Students)
• Career Exploration
• Finding a Mentor
• Creating a Brag Sheet
• College Visits
• PSAT, SAT, ACT

Apply (High School Seniors)
• College Applications
• Financial Aid Applications
• College Scholarships

COLLEGE BOUND TIPS

You can’t get in if you don’t apply. ApplyTexas.org lets you submit one application to all Texas public universities as well as many private and two-year colleges.

Your scores matter.
Study hard, keep your GPA high, and take the PSAT, SAT and/or ACT for college applications and scholarships.

Visit college campuses.
Your options for college include two-year schools, technical schools and certificate programs, as well as universities. Visit campuses and make the choice that’s right for you.

Find a mentor.
Seek out a knowledgeable adult to guide you through the college application process. Talk with someone who works in a career that sparks your curiosity.

Create a brag sheet.
It’s never too early to create a brag sheet that organizes all of your accomplishments, community service, awards, internships, etc. This handy document will help you fill out scholarship applications, college applications, and prepare for interviews.
Generation TX Month Events Can Help You Provide Required College Access Information to Your Students

Generation TX Month events can provide an excellent platform for school districts, middle schools and high schools to meet the requirements of Section 29.911 of the Education Code, which requires each district or school to designate one week each year as Generation TX Week. Because the focus of Generation TX Month is on college admissions, college readiness and financial aid, Generation TX Month events can provide the means for school districts and schools to meet this statutory requirement.

During Generation TX Week, each middle school and high school must provide comprehensive grade-appropriate information regarding the pursuit of higher education including:

- Higher education options available to students;
- Standard admission requirements for institutions of higher education, including:
  - Overall high school grade point average;
  - Required curriculum;
  - College readiness standards and expectations as determined under Section 28.008;
  - Scores necessary on generally recognized tests or assessment instruments used in admissions determinations, including the Scholastic Assessment Test and the American College Test;
  - Automatic admission of certain students to general academic teaching institutions as provided by Section 51.803; and
  - Financial aid availability and requirements, including the financial aid information provided by counselors under Section 33.007(b).
- In addition, each middle school, junior high school, and high school shall provide to the students during the designated week at least one public speaker to promote the importance of higher education.

Generation TX key messages will assist campaign partners, counselors and advisers in their efforts to build excitement for college and provide important reminders for students as they settle into their school year. These key messages, which are outlined below, provide the foundation for the Generation TX Month.

The Generation TX Month community planning guide and kit provides ideas, content, templates, and direction for campaign partners, while also letting you tailor Generation TX Month to your own regional promotional efforts. We hope you’ll join us in supporting the students in your community by making Generation TX your own. Together we can help inspire our students to begin thinking about their next steps on the path to college and careers.
GETTING STARTED: YOUR GENERATION TX MONTH TOOLKIT

Focusing Your Efforts

As the champions for fostering a college-going and career-ready culture in your community/school, you provide the focal point from which public education, higher education, business and community leaders can align their efforts for education. Your leadership, support and enthusiasm for Generation TX Month can serve as a rally point to launch and fuel the Generation TX movement among these critical audiences.

One of your biggest opportunities is to involve others. Planning for Generation TX Month should be a fun and engaging way to involve many members of your community. You may want to consider forming an ad hoc committee or team to coordinate, execute and report back on all your local Generation TX Month activities. Generation TX Month also provides a great opportunity to involve student groups as you begin to organize and assign responsibilities. These organizations may include student G-Force groups, ROTC, AVID students, student councils, Girl Scouts, sports teams, and others. Remember, participation in this type of meaningful initiative is a great addition to a student’s brag sheet for college applications.

This planning guide is designed to help you quickly inform key audiences about Generation TX Month and the Generation TX movement. It is full of resources, tips and simple steps that you can take to make this seasonal promotion a success in your community. As you plan your own Generation TX Month events, generate exciting ideas and create an action plan to bring Generation TX Month to life in your community, you may want to reach out to primary stakeholders in your community. We’ve included example “asks” that you can use as you round up support. Key stakeholders to consider include:

- P-16 Councils
- Public Schools
- Chambers of Commerce and Business Leaders
- Local Media
- Community Organizations
- Mayors and Local Officials

We’ve also included outreach ideas to explore after your Generation TX Month promotions have ended for the year. These will help you maintain the valuable momentum you have created.

Mark your calendars

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will open on October 1!

This guide is designed to provide guidance on planning events that incorporate both college admission and financial aid application efforts.
Your Generation TX Month Toolkit

The following materials are available in the GenTX.org Download Center. It is our hope that you will use these materials— in addition to any other Generation TX items you already have in place—to bring excitement and impact to Generation TX Month throughout your community.

Generation TX Month Toolkit

- **Generation TX Month** Community Planning Guide (This Document)
  This planning guide provides ideas and templates to help you design, organize, and implement your GenTX Month events.

- **Generation TX Month** Higher Ed Partner Request Letter Template (MS Word)

- **Generation TX Month** Business Partner Request Letter Template (MS Word)

- **GenTX Poster Series**
  - You Can’t Get In If You Don’t Apply (PDF)
  - College Begins In High School (PDF)
  - College Is For You (PDF)
  - Think You Can’t Afford College? Think Again. (PDF)

- **Generation TX Month** Promotion Messages (PDF) includes:
  - Key Messages and FAQ for Newsletters, Signage, and Marquees (MS Word)
  - School Announcements and Radio PSA Scripts (MS Word, English and Spanish)

- **Generation TX Month** Blank Shell Flyer (Color & Grayscale, MS Word)

In addition, you can find Generation TX Merchandise, from lanyards to t-shirts, to promote activities throughout Generation TX Month on our online store at GenTXStore.com.

Each community will embrace and implement Generation TX Month in its own way. Generation TX Month is a great opportunity to introduce your community and students to Generation TX. Continue to spread the word about Generation TX, and encourage people in your community to join the movement at GenTX.org. The time to start planning for Generation TX Month is now. Thank you in advance for joining the celebration of higher education and of Generation TX.
CELEBRATING GENERATION TX MONTH
CELEBRATING GENERATION TX MONTH IN YOUR COMMUNITY/SCHOOL

Many schools already have a number of events and resources in place to help students explore their college and career options and take the next steps to apply for those opportunities. Campaign partners, counselors, and college advisers are well positioned to bring these resources together under the Generation TX Month umbrella, and get local higher education and business partners to plug into college and career-related events to make them even bigger and better. This guide offers three main ideas for how campaign partners, advisers and school counselors can celebrate Generation TX Month by leveraging existing opportunities and incorporating new events into the calendar:

1. GenTX Your School
2. Host Generation TX Month Pep Rallies
3. Create Partnerships with Higher Education and Business

Idea 1: GenTX Your School

The first step in helping students rock their future is to surround them with GenTX informational and inspirational messages to get them thinking about college and the steps necessary to get there. There are lots of easy ways you can GenTX your school as a counselor, college adviser, or other administrator by using existing templates and resources in the GenTX.org Download Center. You can spread the excitement and share the Generation TX message by:

- Using Generation TX Month customizable flyers (available in the Generation TX Month Promotion Kit) to promote college planning and career exploration events around your school.
- Printing resources available from the Print section of the Download Center and displaying them around your campus.
- Downloading copies of the GenTX College Planning Guide (available in the Generation TX Download Center) and placing them somewhere for students to browse, such as the school office, library, GO Center, counselor’s office, or bulletin board. Distribute the guides during college planning workshops, presentations, and individual meetings, and use the guide to walk students through the college preparation and application process.
- Using the Generation TX Month Promotion Messages (available in the Download Center) to make morning announcements about important upcoming college-related events and posting messages on your school’s marquee.
- Printing GenTX Learn More Earn More flyers to distribute during college planning workshops, presentations and individual student meetings.
- Ensuring GenTX.org is whitelisted for access on your school’s computers (see the Whitelist Flyer in the Organizer Guide section of the Download Center).
Idea 2: Create a Generation TX Month Pep Rally

A pep rally is a fun and creative way to inspire students to rock their future. Use templates provided in the Download Center to plan and promote your event. Following are some things to consider as you create your pep rally.

Planning your event:
- Talk to your district and school administration to identify a date that works well for your campus and capitalize on other college-related activities that may be happening around the same time.
- You may want to consider hosting a joint event with your middle school and inviting the class that will be coming to high school the following year to be part of the event.
- Consider inviting a DJ from a local radio station to emcee the event and play music to get students inspired.
- Invite local university representatives, admissions officers, current college students and/or alumni to speak at the pep rally (use the College Partner Request Letter).
- Ask for in-kind donations from local businesses for food, giveaways and prizes (use the Business Partner Letter).
- Work with your administration to give incentives to students on pep rally day if they complete certain college/career activities (e.g., students get “free dress” day on pep rally day if they register for the PSAT/ACT/SAT by a certain date).
- Visit the Generation TX Month Promotion Kit on the Download Center to get the design files for the Generation TX Month banner, badges and 2-sided sign cards. Take them to a local printer to get these items produced. Hang banners in the gym, attach the Generation TX Month badges to student GenTX lanyards to wear during the pep rally and hand out the 2-sided cards to students to wave in the crowd.

Promoting your event:
- Visit the Generation TX Month Promotion Kit at the Download Center, where you’ll find customizable flyers and posters to promote your pep rally on your campus.
- Display a Generation TX Month message on your school’s marquee on the day of your event.
- Ask your school district to promote your event using the Generation TX Month Newsletter Insert (available in the Promotion Messages document in the Generation TX Month Promotion Kit).

Sharing your success:
- Email photos and videos from your Generation TX Month events and share them on the Generation TX Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat so other regions can see your great work! Use #IApplied and other hashtags or handles to spread the word!
Idea 3: Create Partnerships with Higher Education and Business

As you plan your own Generation TX Month events, generate exciting ideas and create an action plan to bring Generation TX Month to life, you may want to reach out to community stakeholders, such as higher education partners, chambers of commerce and local businesses. In the Generation TX Month Planning Kit, you’ll find Higher Ed and Business Partner Request Letter templates that you can use as you round up support.

Institutions of Higher Education

The primary partners to focus on in scaling a community’s Generation TX Month promotion are institutions of higher education. Summer is a good time for campaign partners and counselors to reach out to local colleges and universities, including a mix of 2-year and 4-year schools, to be partners. Some ideas for collaboration might include:

• Asking higher education partners to host a field trip for local middle and high school students to visit their campus.

• Inviting representatives from local colleges and universities to host a booth at a Generation TX Month college fair on your school’s campus.

• Inviting higher education partners to participate in a Generation TX Month pep rally at your school by sending a speaker or providing their college’s branded merchandise for giveaways at the pep rally.

• Inviting administrators, current students, and/or alumni from local colleges to participate in a panel about college and careers.

Business Organizations/Chambers of Commerce

Other partners for communities to consider involving in their Generation TX Month activities are their chambers of commerce and local businesses.

• Invite employees from local businesses or chambers of commerce to participate in a Generation TX Month pep rally and other events. Ask them to speak to students about their college experience, explaining how it impacted their career, their life and their opportunities.

• Ask for sponsorship donations to pay for a DJ, prizes for a drawing that students can enter by completing college-going activities, and/or a bus to take a group of students on a campus visit.

• Ask for assistance approaching other local businesses, or local higher education institutions, in supporting a pep rally or other college-going activities you are planning for Generation TX Month. (Be sure to consult district policies regarding campus visits and to coordinate with other programs such as Advise TX that may be serving on your campus).
MORE WAYS PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAN FUEL THE GENERATION TX MOVEMENT

• Encourage all students to join the movement at GenTX.org as a great way to stay engaged and focused throughout the summer.

• Download and display Generation TX materials in your school throughout the year. You can even become a Generation TX campus by creating and prominently displaying a co-branded logo mark on all materials throughout your school.

• Encourage counselors to direct students to GenTX.org to find information on preparing, applying and paying for higher education.

• Start a GenTX Student Club on campus focused on creating a college-going and career-ready culture within your school.

• Ask local institutions of higher education to provide banners and posters to display around your campus to inspire students and get them thinking about college.

• Encourage high school G-Force alumni to return to their high schools to share inspirational messages with current students.

• Encourage higher education partners to align Generation TX with G-Force teams, mobile GO Centers and other school outreach efforts.

• Encourage your P-16 Council, city leaders, chambers of commerce, and business partners to reinforce and support the students of Generation TX on your campus and throughout your community.
P-16 COUNCILS: SUPPORTING GENERATION TX MONTH IN YOUR COMMUNITY

As respected community leaders and organizers, P-16 Councils are uniquely positioned to bring Generation TX Month to life across all stakeholder groups. This seasonal promotion can take place any time between January and March, and we encourage gearing up as early as possible during that time. Not only will an early start help you make a stronger impact on students as they start back at school, but you will also be better positioned to promote timely FAFSA completion. FAFSA applications open October 1 each year, and schools award aid on a first come, first served basis, so the earlier students and parents know about it, the earlier they can apply.

This guide offers ideas about how to promote Generation TX Month both at an overall community level and in school. Both are valuable venues for the financial aid discussion, and we are confident that each community will find a great balance of efforts in both.

The Top Three Ways P-16 Councils Can Lead Generation TX Month

1. Create a Generation TX Month Event - The length of your promotion is flexible. Generation TX is promoting a month because it is long enough to cover all the ins and outs of student admissions and financial aid on a high level. In the next section of this guide, you’ll find several different ideas about how this concept can take shape in your community.

2. Champion Generation TX Month throughout the Community - Publicly endorse the Generation TX movement and Generation TX Month to your council membership via your newsletter, personal letters and/or phone calls. Share this guide with your business, education and community partners and ask them to plug in and join your efforts.

3. Secure Endorsements for Generation TX Month and Generation TX - Ask your fellow business, community and city leaders to publicly endorse Generation TX Month and Generation TX. There are lots of creative ways to share this support with your community and its students. Some ideas include: create an ad to run in your newspaper that lists supporters, thank supporters on a special page on your website, send “supporter shout outs” on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #Generation TX.
More Ways P–16 Councils Can Fuel the Generation TX Movement

Download the P-16 Council training manual for more ideas and information on spreading the GenTX movement throughout your community.

- Align Generation TX with your P-16 education initiatives.
- Encourage higher education partners to align Generation TX with G-Force teams, mobile Go Centers and other school outreach efforts.
- Work with public school officials to ensure that:
  - The GenTX.org website is whitelisted on all campuses.
  - They are aware of the GenTX promotional materials available in the GenTX.org Download Center.
  - Counselors download the GenTX Counselor Training Manual and direct students to GenTX.org for information on preparing, applying and paying for higher education.
CELEBRATING SUCCESS

We are confident that Generation TX Month will be a tremendous success and become an ongoing tradition in your community as a result of your efforts. We look forward to sharing your success with others across the state through our public relations and social media efforts, as well as through our internal reporting to the THECB.

During Generation TX Month, we will be using #IApplied to fuel the movement and encourage others to join the movement on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. We ask that you tag photos, videos and snaps on social media using #IApplied

Some quick and easy ways to get the word out:

Share photos, videos and your story with us!
- Post to Generation TX Facebook page.
- Tag us on Instagram.
- Follow Generation TX on Twitter and tweet at us.
- And share your events via Snapchat (username: Generation TX)
- Upload to your YouTube site and tag them: Generation TX and Generation TX Month so we can share them via our YouTube Channel.
- Email them to info@GenTX.org.

Tag Your Moments, Events and Successes!
- Tag Generation TX Month events with the hashtags @GenerationTexas, #IApplied, and #GenerationTXMonth
- Keep an eye out for and use #ApplyTexas, #ApplyTX, #FAFSA, #FinancialAid and #FinAidFridays
- Get creative with your own tags!
**GENERATION TX MONTH ACTION PLAN**

The following outline can help guide your efforts and organize your action items for the Generation TX Month seasonal promotion. This should serve as a starting point as you plan initial ideas, build partnerships, create assignments and bring Generation TX Month to life. We welcome you to add to and customize this plan based on your community’s approach.

**Planning Team Members**

Who do you need to plan this promotion successfully?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________


**Goals**

What impact do you hope to have on financial aid understanding and engagement in your community?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________


**Key Audiences**

Who are you targeting with your efforts? Students and parents? Elementary, middle and/or high schools? What are their key barriers to financial aid?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Potential Dates
When will you launch your initiative, and when will events take place? When should your Generation TX Month event happen? Keep in mind, an important date is October 1, when FAFSA application period opens.

Existing Events
What financial aid events already exist that you might consider building on? And are there any other large events in your community where your target audience may be reachable?
**Generation TX Month Action Plan**

**Potential Partners to Solicit/Roles**

What partner organizations and individuals do you want to get in your corner? What will be your specific requests from them?

If you need administrative support to help you approach potential partners, who needs to be on board (e.g., superintendent, principal, school board member, etc.)?

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<th>Community Organizations</th>
<th>Community Leaders, Celebrities or Spokespeople</th>
<th>Current College Students or Recent Graduates</th>
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