



# Manual

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Chapter 1. Go Center Design and Philosophy  
Definition  
Design Elements  
Starting a Go Center

Chapter 2. Go Center Sponsor  
Definition  
Role of Sponsor

Chapter 3. G-Force  
Definition  
Role of G-Force Members  
Developing a G-Force

Chapter 4. Outreach  
Outreach Strategies  
Statewide Outreach Projects  
Local Outreach Projects

Chapter 5. Message  
The Benefits of College  
College Admissions  
Financial Aid

Chapter 6. Evaluation  
Purpose  
Indicators  
Reporting Requirements  
Baseline Survey

Chapter 7. Strategic Planning  
Purpose  
Basic strategic planning concepts  
Strategic planning considerations

Chapter 8. Resources  
Tips from Current Go Centers  
Web Resources  
Print Resources

## PREFACE

In 2001, the 77<sup>th</sup> Legislature adopted *Closing the Gaps*, a proactive plan designed in part to increase Texans' participation and success in higher education.

As a result, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board launched *College for Texans*, a marketing and outreach initiative in 2002 with the slogan "Education. Go Get It." The goal of the campaign is to enroll 630,000 academically prepared students by 2015, 430,000 beyond the 200,000 expected to attend college at current rates.

Part of the campaign strategy is reaching these students by building strong partnerships in communities across Texas.

As part of this grassroots network, Go Centers are being implemented in communities across the state to help recruit students into higher education.

Initially, Go Centers are being located on high school and middle school campuses where they serve as a point of coordination between students, P-12 counselors, and institutions of higher education. At the Go Center, students will find a variety of resources to help them better prepare and plan for college. Middle/High school and Collegiate G-Forces assist students in finding information and exploring options.

This handbook is designed to help:

- Learn how to establish Go Centers in the community.
- Recruit new G-Force members.
- Support the Go Center and G-Force network.
- Mentor G-Force members in their efforts to assist peers in developing the elements required to successfully transition from high school graduation to post-secondary education.

# CHAPTER 1

## GO CENTER DESIGN AND PHILOSOPHY

### **Definition**

Go Centers are local centers of energy and effort that focus on creating a school-wide college-going culture and promoting college awareness in the surrounding community.

### **Types**

*Traditional* Go Centers are located in educational settings. They generally are located on high school campuses, but can also be found on middle school and/or college/university campuses.

*Satellite* Go Centers are located in non-educational settings. These can be found in public libraries, local workforce centers, or community centers.

*Mobile* Go Centers are, as the name indicates, mobile units outfitted with computers, printers, and internet connectivity. They will travel to a variety of nontraditional settings (i.e., festivals, sporting events, supermarket or mall parking lots, and schools that do not have Go Centers).

### **Design Elements**

While every Go Center is different, they all contain the following common design elements:

- A room or space (i.e., section of the library) located on site that is open and accessible.
- A Go Center Sponsor.
- Racks that contain college catalogs, pamphlets and other college related print materials
- Shelving or drawers that contain stacks of printed forms for various scholarships, financial aid, school admissions or other programs that require the submission of an application.
- Posters or banners on the walls promoting various education related topics, programs or institutions.
- Display Area/Board (for display Calendar of Events, College Fairs, Important Test Dates).

### **Peer Education**

Increasing college enrollment rates is a matter of changing cultural norms. Effective strategies designed to change cultural norms must include the development of a system that uses positive peer pressure. The body of research on peer education clearly shows that the messenger may be more influential than the message. For this reason, Go Centers rely heavily on the creation of peer educators, known as G-Force, to carry the college-going message to their peers.

Another reason for utilizing peer educators is the need to maximize limited resources at the local level. School counselors typically shoulder the majority of the workload of providing assistance to students interested in pursuing post-secondary education. These individuals are typically responsible for a variety of other functions in the school as well. The establishment of a network of peer

educators allows the counselor to meet the specific needs of more students as the peer educators assist students with the more general aspects of the college awareness and enrollment process.

**NOTE: G-Force members are NOT counselors, simply facilitators of the process who provide very general information, motivate students to act on that information, help them get started in the process and then refer them to the appropriate resource person for more difficult issues. When peer mentors are able to answer many of the more general questions, the counselor can focus on more difficult issues.**

## **Starting a Go Center**

There are only a few requirements for opening a Traditional Go Center on a middle/high school campus.

1. Obtain appropriate approval from the school district and principal.
2. Secure a school faculty or staff member to be the Go Center sponsor.
3. Designate a physical site on campus. This site does not have to be in its own room, but there must be a designated space for at least two computers and resource materials.
4. Provide at least two dedicated computers with Internet access with either a link on the home page or setting the home page to [www.CollegeForTexans.com](http://www.CollegeForTexans.com).
5. Recruit students to become G-Force members.
6. Set up training via P-16 Field Specialist for G-Force members and sponsor.

## **Registering Go Center**

To be an officially recognized Go Center, you must submit a Go Center Partnership Form (**Attachment A**). The form must be signed by the Go Center Sponsor, school principal and someone from the district office (i.e., Superintendent or Director of Counselors) and submitted to the P-16 Field Specialist who will then send it to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## **Setting up your Go Center**

New Go Centers will receive branding items once they are officially recognized. These items are to be used to designate the primary Go Center on campus. It is up to you how you will arrange your Go Center. A typical Go Center will contain the following:

- Desks/tables and chairs
- At least two computers (Desktop PC , Notebook or Laptop) connected to the Internet<sup>1</sup> (three or more would be optimal)
- Telephone
- Printer
- Computer (Desktop PC/Laptop/Notebook) minimum requirements:
  - Pentium III (or better)
  - 512mb of RAM (or better)
  - 40GB hard drive (or better)
  - 48X CD-RW drive
  - Windows XP Professional Operating System
  - Word Processing Software
- Shelves with FAFSA forms, Texas Common Application, community college applications and other items
- Sign in area.

## **Go Center Resources**

- University Brochures
- College Catalogs
- Financial aid information

<sup>1</sup> Cable/Broadband Internet connection would be most advantageous

- FAFSA application
- Posters promoting higher education
- College posters and pennants
- Scholarship information
- Resources to help guide students in choosing the right college
- Resources to help students find their interests when choosing a major

# GO CENTER LAUNCH PROCESS

## Launch Check List

- ✓ Go Center location
- ✓ Active G-Force members
- ✓ Mission Statement
- ✓ Invitation List
- ✓ Launch Plan
- ✓ Invitation and Promotional materials

## Mission Statement

G-Force members should get together and create a Mission Statement for the Go Center.

## Definition

A mission statement should be a short, clear, concise statement that describes the purpose of the Go Center.

## Example of mission statement

“The mission of the Go Center is to significantly increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.”

–*McAllen Memorial High School*

## Process of Writing a Mission Statement

1. Who
2. What
3. Why

**Mission Statement:**

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## **LAUNCH PLAN**

- **Set a launch date and time**
  - Start with campus calendar
  - Speak to principal
  - Keep in mind work schedules, after school activities, testing dates
  - Schedule Speakers
  
- **Invitations**
  - Guest Speakers
  - School officials
  - Parents
  - Community leaders
  - Community-based organizations
  
- **Promotions**

Begin promoting as soon as possible: call/e-mail/fax information weeks in advance of the launch.

  - Distribute promotional material (fliers, postcards, pamphlets) on campus and in the community
  - Contact the school paper (if applicable)
  - Make an announcement to the entire school
  - Contact the local newspapers & T.V. and radio stations to cover the launch
  - Work closely with Collegiate G-Force members and/or local higher education institutions

**Note: It is helpful to try to get donations for gifts or gift certificates for door prizes—this attracts more people (parents, students, and others) to attend the launch. Also, try to get donations for refreshments to be served on the day of the launch. Remember it's your GO CENTER and your LAUNCH!!!**

## **CHAPTER 2 GO CENTER SPONSOR**

### **Definition**

A Go Center Sponsor provides direct support and assistance to G-Force members and promotes the college-going message to other professional staff.

### **Role of Go Center Sponsor**

Based on initial evaluations of Go Centers, the Go Center Sponsor is the most critical piece in creating a successful Center. Because of this, the Sponsor must believe in the Go Center and its purpose. If the Sponsor shows little or no interest, the students may also show little or no interest.

The responsibilities of the Sponsor include the following:

- 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 (i.e., matters involving confidentiality, academic or guidance counseling, etc.).
- Recruit and organize G-Force members.
- Motivate your G-Force members.
- Assist G-Force members with preparing, launching and running the Go Center.
- Plan or coordinate activities related to creating a college going culture (often done in collaboration with P-16 Field Specialist).

**NOTE: Planning and carrying out the Go Center activities should not be the sole responsibility of the Sponsor. This is where recruitment of an active G-Force is essential.**

### **Set Schedules**

- Have a schedule indicating hours of operation
- Have a schedule indicating the hours G-Force members will be volunteering at the Go Centers
- Have goals to be accomplished throughout the academic school year

### **Conduct Presentations**

- Present information on higher education topics at the Go Center, in classrooms, cafeteria, or community center.
- Remember to use Middle School, High School and/or Collegiate G-Force to help with presentations

**NOTE: The P-16 Field Specialist can assist you in getting speakers and perhaps even present themselves.**

### **Update Resources**

- Research free resources
- Order resources for Go Center

### **Document your Success**

- Sign-in sheets for students—always have a sign-in sheet at the Go Center  
and have all students sign in
- Keep a log of G-Force volunteer work
- Document every event held with sign-in sheets
- Take pictures of events, G-Force members in action, etc.

### **Keep Connected**

- Keep in touch with other G-Force chapters, both at the local and statewide levels
- Keep in communication with P-16 Field Specialist

## **CHAPTER 3 G-FORCE**

### **Definition**

G-Force is a network of students/volunteers committed to achieving a college-going culture by supporting Go Center efforts.

### **Role of G-Force Members**

Students often need help to maintain the momentum required by the college preparation process to complete their quest to enter college. G-Force members help create the drive in other students to go to college. G-Force members raise awareness among students and their families on the value of a higher education, show them how to prepare for college both academically and financially, and motivate students to successfully pursue higher education.

The G-Force is a key element of the Go Center. The most successful Go Centers will place the students in a leadership role. The commitment level of the members to the Go Center will be directly proportional to the level of ownership they feel.

### **Middle School and High School G-Force Requirements**

1. Pursue Recommended High School Curriculum (High School only)
2. Maintain an 80% grade average\*
3. Maintain a 95% attendance rate
4. Commit to the creation of a college-going culture

\* The 80% average pertains to the student's grade average once he/she has entered G-Force. Many of the targeted students will not have 80% averages initially. However, these students can have the greatest impact on their peers. The 80% requirement begins with the grades subsequent to the student joining G-force.

### **Collegiate G-Force Requirements**

Currently there are over 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. Each institution has established a student organization on their campus known as G-Force which includes officers.

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

## **Developing a G-Force**

When initiating a Go Center, it is suggested that the school recruit 10 students to serve as the charter members of the G-Force. The students must meet the general requirements for G-Force members. It is also recommended that the school consider the following additional suggestions:

1. *Choose students from all grade levels.* The older students will provide maturity while the younger students will provide continuity.
2. *Choose students from a variety of backgrounds and/or peer groups.* By diversifying your initial group you will be able to reach a larger portion of the student body.
3. *Choose several students who will be first-generation college students.* These students can provide significant insight into the barriers that many first-generation students are facing. These students typically have the most barriers to overcome and likely have few personal role models regarding the pursuit of a college education.

The actual process of selecting G-Force members is left to the discretion of the Go Center Sponsor. A variety of methods have been deployed. Some schools simply appoint G-force members based on the recommendations of the counselor and/or principal. Some schools have announced the program to the entire student body or to a select group of students inviting them to go through an application and interview process. Each of these methods has been successful.

### *Growth and Sustainability*

After your initial G-Force is trained and the Go Center is operational, you may discover that the needs of your school are greater than the 10 students you have trained can meet. You will need to develop strategies that will allow you to recruit new students to expand the size of your membership and to replace your existing G-Force members once they graduate.

1. *Look for opportunities to increase the visibility of G-Force members.* Create T-shirts for G-Force members and wear them on certain days. Place a group picture of G-Force in the school annual. Many schools place cut-outs of footballs, volleyballs, and other symbols on school lockers to identify students who are participating in those activities. Develop something similar for G-Force members.
2. *Look for opportunities to develop benefits for G-Force members.* G-Force members put a great deal of volunteer effort into making their school academically stronger. Find ways for the school and community to show their appreciation. For example, every Go Center has G-Force membership cards. Find merchants in town that will give discounts to students with G-Force membership cards.
3. *Look for and facilitate opportunities to identify and validate leadership traits in potential G-Force members.* Look for opportunities for students to help other students. After they help the other person, follow up with the student you asked to help. Make sure they understand the role they just

played in helping the other student move closer to college. Talk about how good it felt to help someone else and that they have the ability to feel that way all the time as a G-Force member. Tell them about the need to get more students into college and that you need more students to help out. Encourage them to consider becoming a G-Force member.

### **G-Force Training**

Prior to opening a Go Center, the P-16 Field Specialist provides training for G-Force members and Sponsors. The training is designed to provide G-Force members with the basic skills and knowledge needed to facilitate others in the college motivation and enrollment process. The training is also designed to motivate and inspire the students to be highly committed to the creation of a college-going culture. The trainings are free and coordinated by the P-16 Field Specialist.

The P-16 Field Specialist will provide on-going training opportunities. These continuing education options will be based on discussions with G-Force members and their Sponsors.

### **G-Force Guidelines**

A few do's and don'ts that G-Force members must adhere to include:

#### G-Force Members DO:

- Refer students to the Go Center.
- Encourage students to consider college.
- Develop and disseminate messages to student peers regarding college, including important dates and deadlines.
- Respect other students' decisions and choices regarding post-secondary education.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding academic issues.
- Remind students of Go Center appointments.

#### G-Force Members DON'T:

- Advise or make specific recommendations about colleges or universities or discourage students from exploring a variety of options.
- Debate or argue with other students about post-secondary education options.
- Divulge information about other students.
- Fill out any application on behalf of another student (college, financial aid, scholarship).
- Write essays or do any other academic work on behalf of another student.

## **Basic Guidelines**

While each Go Center establishes its own operational process, many schools have asked for some basic guidelines on how the mentoring process should take place. The following outline is a general guide based on discussions with several Go Centers.

### Typical Process for a G-Force Member when meeting with Student

#### Step 1: Arrive at Go Center

- Sign G-Force register
- Ensure student signs in
- Organize any needed materials for session

#### Step 2: Meet with the student

- Assess needs (ask student if they need help and in what area)
- Explain general process, if applicable

#### Step 3: Provide Student with Basic Information

- Hard copy
- Online version from [CollegeforTexans.com](http://CollegeforTexans.com)

#### Step 4: Introduce College Checklist

- Indicate appropriate tasks
- Support student and make it fun

#### Step 5: Determine Actions and Appropriate Tools

- Develop next steps
- Identify tools that will facilitate tasks

#### Step 6: Facilitate the Process

- Follow up with student on agreed assignments
- Provide additional assistance as needed
- Provide appropriate referrals to more qualified individuals as needed

#### Step 7: Document

- Complete required documentation of activity

**NOTE: G-Force members are NOT counselors, simply facilitators of the process who provide very general information, motivate students to act on that information, help them get started in the process and then refer them to the appropriate resource person for more difficult issues. When peer mentors are able to answer many of the more general questions, the counselor can focus on more difficult issues.**

## **Collegiate G-Force Calendar**

Institutions of higher education work on an abbreviated academic year when compared to that of the public school system. With this in mind, it is important that both partners understand the varying time constraints under which the other must operate.

Public Schools: Academic year begins during first part of August, with mid-year falling just after the middle of December. Schools begin again at the first part of January and run through May or early June.

Colleges and Universities: Students usually do not begin their fall semester until the very end of August/first of September, with most students finishing the semester during the first part of December (students spend December studying for finals, which are usually completed by mid December). The spring semester does not begin until the end of January and runs until early May (students spend early May studying for finals). Some students spend their summer in summer school, which usually consists of two main sessions during the summer months; other students spend this time working and earning money for the year ahead or gaining professional experience through summer internships.

Collegiate G-Force members are therefore only available for active participation during the following timeframes (unless otherwise noted):

***Fall:* September-November**

***Spring:* February-April**

The higher education/public education partnership exists to serve as a formal connection point or bridge between middle/high schools and area colleges and universities. The college students connected to a particular Go Center provide high school students with a physical representation of the often distant notion of a college education. These Collegiate G-Force members also bring life and energy onto a high school campus, and often develop a mentoring relationship with many of the high school students. Even with this energy, the higher education partner is not the driving force behind the Go Center, nor do they desire to be so - institutions of higher education wish to support the hard work that high school counselors and administrators already do to support local youth by focusing on Go Center and G-Force team development. They look to the adult leadership and students at the high school for information regarding how they can best serve that school through the G-Force partnership. The higher education partner is one resource and source of support in a network of programs, organizations, and individuals that are pulled together in a community to support Go Center efforts.

## **Go Center General Timeline**

The following information is intended as a general guide or framework for Go Center activity. For specific details on working with students at each grade level, be sure to use the appropriate Go Center Checklist:

### **August**

- Prepare Go Center for upcoming year; make sure center is stocked with appropriate materials (especially PSAT, SAT and ACT registration forms) and computers are functioning well
- Develop marketing plan for Go Center – How will you get the word out to freshmen and new students? What events do you have planned for the fall semester?

### **September**

- Post SAT and ACT test dates and registration deadlines; make sure Go Center is well stocked with registration packets and practice booklets
- Guide students through the career exploration process
- Assist students in exploring college options – visit college websites, look through college catalogs and guidebooks, organize college visits
- Post information about local college fairs
- Post early admission deadlines for local colleges
- Use 'College Application Checklist' with seniors to guide them through college application process; keep this checklist in student file and review with each Go Center visit

### **October**

- Assist students in researching scholarships ([www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) and others posted in Go Center)
- Continue guiding seniors with 'College Application Checklist' (use in every visit with seniors)
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders

### **November**

- Assist individual students requesting college catalogs, admissions requirements, and financial aid for colleges of interest
- Continue researching and applying for scholarships
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders

### **December/January**

- Collect information for mid-year report to P-16 Field Specialist
- Continue scholarship research and application
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders
- Prepare Go Center for spring semester; make sure center is stocked with appropriate materials (FAFSA forms and Texas Common Applications in

- both English and Spanish)
- Develop marketing plan and activities for Financial Aid Month in February

### **February**

- FINANCIAL AID MONTH – Coordinate activities to have seniors complete and submit their FAFSA (encourage students to submit applications online, but allow them to take a hard copy home to complete beforehand)
- Check in with senior students to make sure they have taken the SAT/ACT, have completed and submitted the FAFSA form online, and have identified 3 college to which they will apply
- Continue using 'College Application Checklist' to guide seniors

### **March/April**

- Support seniors as they complete college admission applications and FAFSA forms; encourage them to submit copies of their college acceptance letters for file and possible display in Go Center if desired.
- Support seniors as they choose the college that is best for them
- Continue career exploration with 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders
- Continue college exploration

### **May**

- Continue supporting seniors as they make choices about life after high school
- Continue career exploration with 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders
- Collect information for end-of-year report to Regional Coordinator

### **June/July**

- Encourage students to:
  - Visit colleges and universities of interest
  - Volunteer in the community
  - Find a summer job or internship in field of interest

## **CHAPTER 4 OUTREACH**

### **Outreach Strategies**

One of the primary roles of a Go Center is to organize and conduct various outreach projects designed to educate and motivate students and their families to pursue a college education. The Go Center contains several resources that enable parents, educators, and members of the local community to take ownership informing students about the opportunities in pursuing higher education credentials. An effective outreach program will be the primary driver of students into the Go Center.

### **General Outreach**

- Play college videos over the campus television system between classes.
- Hang college posters around your school building.
- Promote college night on your campus. Coordinate school bus transportation to the fair if it is off campus. Provide students with a list of questions to ask college recruiters.
- Organize college field trips to area colleges and universities. Have students complete application or interest forms for that particular college to continue their connection with the campus.
- Hold financial aid nights in February in which students and parents can get assistance with their FAFSA forms.

### **Connecting Back to the Go Center**

- Meet with campus department heads (math, English, science, etc.) to come up with creative ways to connect with the Go Centers. English teachers can require students to write a college essay and include a visit to the Go Center as part of the assignment. Math teachers can have students go to the Go Center and research the various expenses associated with attending college (tuition, fees, room and board, etc.) and do a comparative analysis between universities. Computer and keyboarding teachers can have a computer-based, virtual “scavenger hunt” for college and financial aid information; they can also have students complete online career interest surveys (on Career Cruising, if available) and report back on a career of interest. Approaching individual departments may be more effective than sending a general message to the entire faculty.
- Consider creating a job posting board in the Go Center with information on part-time positions open to students after school or on the weekend.
- Use of curriculum based activities developed by the Coordinating Board.

### **Marketing to Select Audiences**

- Continually market the Go Center to school faculty. Make presentations at faculty meetings and bring in students to talk about the work they are doing in the Go Center. Have handouts for the faculty (see Go Center Manual for a sample handout).
- Find creative ways to get parents on campus. One school decided to spice up their financial aid night by having a “Hip Hop Into College” night – students participated in a talent show...with college and financial aid info sessions thrown in for parents and students in the audience! Local

- businesses donated prizes for the winning act.
- Connect with parent “booster clubs” to spread the message about college. Ask to send a representative to one of their meetings to talk briefly about the Go Center and the need to encourage their kids to attend college.
  - FOOD is always a good marketing tool to get attendance numbers up.

### **Go Center Support**

- Make sure your GEAR UP, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Communities in Schools, Project Stay, Project Grad, and/or AVID advisors are working through the Go Center or are somehow connected to it. Offer the space up to them as a meeting or office space when working with students on campus.
- Have college admission counselors/recruiters sign up for specific time slots in the Go Center and allow seniors to sign up for individual admission/advising meetings or interviews.

### **Local Outreach Projects**

Local outreach projects can vary widely ranging from very simple to very involved. The most commonly used outreach project is the delivery of the Go Kit models with classroom presentations. Go Kit presentations are easy to conduct, effective and should be a part of the strategic plan of every Go Center. However, the creativity of several G-Force teams has led to a number of other innovative outreach projects. Here are a few examples:

Education Go Get It! Flag – Corpus Christi Moody High School made 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.

TAKS Day Camp – Mineola High School G-force conducts a TAKS day camp. The high school G-force members conduct a day long camp for middle school students. The G-Force members spend the day with the students conducting various activities that are designed to be fun and educational. The goal of the camp is to convince the students that college is a place they want to go and they need to do well on the TAKS tests to help them get there, and allow the teachers to have TAKS preparation day assessment each student and develop strategies for helping them pass the TAKS test.

Reality Store – Several schools have conducted the Reality Store at their schools. The reality store gives students insight into finances associated with living in the real world, and informs them about the level of education and income needed to live the type of lifestyle they desire. Some schools have developed their own version of the program while others have arranged for Student Team Ministry to bring the Reality Store to their school.

G-Force Assembly – Quitman High School conducted a school assembly to promote their Go Center. They gave presentations from the Go Kit as well as performed sketches they wrote themselves. One character they developed called “G-Force Man” was a big hit.

Career Fair – Several schools with Go Centers in the Lubbock area combined forces to add a Go Center to the regional Career Fair. They set up a Go Center with 20 computers at the fair and conducted career explorations using Careercruising.com for students attending the event. The computers were donated to them by their local workforce center. Each hour they held a drawing from the names of students that had conducted explorations and gave away a computer.

Go Corners – Nine high schools in the Brownsville area created Go Corners in every classroom in their school. A display was erected in the corner of every classroom that contained information on college, FAFSA forms, ACT/SAT information, etc.

Go Hallways – Rio Hondo Middle School turned their hallway into an extension of the Go Center. Huge flags of different colleges were hung from the ceiling in the hallway. Students were literally being hit in the head with the college message as they walked down the hall. In one high traffic area the school placed a television that ran continuous loops of college recruiting videos. Every time the students walked by they saw images of college life.

## CHAPTER 5 GO KIT

### Messages

The *College for Texans* Training Kit, or Go Kit, is a dynamic resource manual that contains critical messages that G-force members will want to share with their peers. The manual contains the basic information on: 1) the benefits of college, 2) college admissions and 3) financial aid. The underlying message of the kit is that college is desirable and obtainable to any student.

The Go Kit is free and downloadable on the College for Texans website at:  
<https://www1.theccb.state.tx.us/Apps/PubOrders/ToolKit.cfm>

**NOTE: Check the website often for additions to the Go Kit.**

### Benefits of College

The Go Kit provides G-force members with basic content needed to lead a discussion or give a presentation to students and parents to help them understand the benefits of a college education, including job opportunities and the financial benefits that come with a college education.

- **Job Opportunities.** The kit provides information that discusses the changing needs of today's workplace. It presents the fact that we are now a part of a global market and competition for jobs will come from all over the world. A discussion of how jobs today require a higher education level than in previous years and how a college education will provide students with greater employment opportunities is also presented.
- **Financial Benefits.** The kit also provides a detailed discussion on the financial benefits of a college education. Exercises that illustrate the actual cost of living in today's society are available in the kit. This is followed by a comparison between a minimum wage salary and a typical salary a college graduate could expect. This is then related to the standard of living a person could expect with and without a college education.

### College Admissions

The Go Kit provides G-Force members with basic content needed to lead a discussion or give a presentation to students and parents to help them understand the various college options that are available in Texas, what factors should be considered when selecting a college, and what requirements must be met to be accepted into the college of their choice.

- **Types of Institutions.** The kit provides information on the various types of colleges that are available such as community colleges, universities, technical schools and health related institutions.
- **Selecting a College.** The kit provides information on what factors to consider when selecting a college. Location, size, degree offerings, graduation rates, and other topics are discussed as factors that students should consider when selecting a college.

- Getting into College. The kit provides information on what factors to consider when preparing for college as well as general steps that must be taken to get into most colleges. This section discusses the importance of early preparation while in K-12th grades. Information is provided on what colleges look for when selecting students for admission. Grades, extra-curricular activities, standardized test scores, references, essays, and other variables are discussed. The kit also provides information that stresses the importance of completing all necessary paperwork in a timely manner. College applications, financial aid applications, and housing applications are discussed as well.

## **Financial Aid**

The Go Kit provides G-force members with basic content needed to lead a discussion or give a presentation to students and parents to help them understand the cost of college, how to reduce the cost of college, and options that are available in Texas to help pay for college.

- Cost of College. The kit provides information on the actual expected financial costs of a college education. Information is provided on the expected expenses of college such as tuition, fees, books, housing, food, transportation and other living expenses.
- Cutting Costs. The kit provides suggestions on ways to reduce the cost of college such as taking Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses or dual credit courses while in high school, preparing academically while in high school to avoid the need for remedial courses, or enrolling in a local community college to take advantage of lower tuition costs and reduce living expenses.
- Financial Aid. The kit also provides a detailed discussion is provided on the types of financial aid that are available to students such as grants, loans, scholarships and work study programs. The kit discusses the difference between need and merit based financial aid. Instruction is provided on how to access need based financial aid by submitting the appropriate paperwork such as the FAFSA and scholarship applications. Information is also provided concerning the factors that most merit based financial aid programs evaluate when selecting recipients. The importance of meeting deadlines and where to go for help is also stressed.

## CHAPTER 6 EVALUATION

### **Purpose**

While documentation is often a tedious task, it is critical to the ability of the Go Center to make the strongest possible impact. It is important to constantly evaluate the final result of Go Center activities to be able to determine if the plans implemented are reaching local and state campaign goals. If results of the evaluation process indicated that you are not reaching the desired outcomes, then changes can be made to improve the process. Be mindful of those practices that are successful. We are not attempting to evaluate individual students, but assess what they like, what interests their family, etc. If your center is successful but you do not have the proper documentation, you cannot communicate to your supporters the impact of your Go Center and the need for continued support nor can the Coordinating Board gain valuable info to share with others.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The campaign will need assistance from each Go Center in collecting data on each of the indicators listed above. The instrument used to collect the data is identified by the number of asterisks (\*) to the right of each indicator.

- \* This information is collected by the local Go Center and entered monthly into the Go Center Evaluation Report form.
- \*\* This information is self-reported by the student, so they need your encouragement.
- \*\*\* This information is collected from the colleges and universities by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- \*\*\*\* This information is collected from TEA from the AEIS report.

### **Indicators**

There are several key indicators that the campaign is using to measure the impact of Go Centers. The campaign is interested in both “output” and “outcome” indicators. Output indicators are measures of the activities that take place through Go Centers. Outcome indicators are measures of changes in student behavior and performance on factors that are directly related to going to college.

#### Output Indicators

- # G-Force members \*
- # Hours contributed by G-Force members \*
- # Students directly mentored by G-Force members \*
- # First Generation College Students being served \*
- # Students visiting the Go Center \*
- # Outreach activities conducted by G-Force members \*
- # Participants at each activity \*
- # Completed aptitude assessments \*\*
- # Students with identified college(s) of choice \*\*
- # Students who have completed checklists
- # Students with a campus visit \*\*

- # Students with a FAFSA pin # \*\*
- # Students with a completed college application \*\*
- # Students with an essay \*\*

Outcome Indicators

- # Students enrolling in college \*\*\*
- # Students completing and submitting college applications \*\*
- # Students completing and submitting FAFSA applications \*\*
- # Students taking SAT/ACT tests \*\*\*\*
- # Students using TOPCAT
- # Students taking AP courses \*\*\*\*
- # Students taking Dual or Concurrent Credit courses \*\*\*\*
- # Students taking Concurrent Credit courses \*\*\*\*
- # Students taking Recommended Curriculum. \*\*\*\*
- # Students taking Distinguished Achievement Program \*\*\*\*
- # Students passing all TAKS tests \*\*\*\*
- # Students taking pre-algebra & other advanced courses in middle school. \*\*\*\*

**Baseline Survey**

Before initiating Go Center activities, it is very helpful to conduct a baseline survey to determine the current status of the students in your school. This is a one-page, 25-question survey that can give you a starting point from which to compare the impact of your Go Center.

### **Go Center Evaluation**

Please complete this evaluation form and return it to one of the G-Force members today before leaving. Your input will assist the staff in its plans for future training.

**Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree**

<b>Survey Items</b>	<b>Rating</b>
I am informed about registering for the ACT/SAT.	
I am informed about preparing academically for the ACT/SAT.	
I know the college I plan to attend offers the major in which I am interested.	
I know what my major will be in college.	
I know how to complete a college application.	
I know community service is important when applying for admission to college.	
I know how to access on line information about college.	
I know about college application fees.	
I know how to find out about college scholarships.	
I have a back up plan in case I do not get into my first choice of college.	
I know what type of degree is required for the job I hope to get.	
I know what college I plan to attend.	
I know about obtaining letters of reference.	
I know how to apply for a college scholarship.	
I know how much college costs on average.	
I know about college application deadlines.	
I know about college credit hours.	
I know about the other fees associated with going to college.	
I know how much books for college cost.	
I know about writing college application essays.	
I know how to find out about college orientation sessions.	
I know the purpose of FAFSA.	
I know about AP/Dual Credit courses.	
I know how to explore college housing options.	
I know what job an advisor has on a college campus.	
I know how to complete a FAFSA.	
I know how to complete a college housing application.	
I know how to get college application fees eliminated.	
I know about college housing deadlines.	
I know how to prepare academically to the THEA.	
I know how to register for THEA.	



## **GO CENTER DOCUMENTATION NEEDED**

### **Go Center Partnership Agreement (page 28)**

- Each academic year, a new agreement needs to be completed.
- This agreement should be submitted to Priscilla Martinez, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's P-16 Field Specialist, via fax to (956) 364-5143.

### **Go Center Sign-in Sheet (page 29)**

- This form is to be kept in the Go Center at all times.
- This form must be filled out when students visit the Go Center.

### **G-Force Information Sheet (page 30)**

- Indicate all current G-Force members
- Indicate grade level, office position, if any, and email address
- Turn in a new form for each new G-force member as you add them

### **G-Force Application (Interest Form-page 31)**

- Every student interested in becoming part of your school's G-force needs to complete a G-Force application.
- G-Force Application will be kept on file for each selected G-Force member.

### **Presentation/Event Sign-In Sheet (page 32)**

- Fill out each time you conduct a presentation
- Everyone attending your presentation needs to sign in.
- Be sure to put the title of the presentation or event
- Include names of High School G-force members that conducted the presentation

### **Presentation Evaluation (page 33)**

- With each presentation given, an evaluation needs to be distributed.
- Attach all evaluations to your sign-in sheet

### **GO Center Monthly Report (page 34)**

- Compile all the information from the previous items and complete this form
- Submit report to Collegiate G-Force member, if any, or Priscilla Martinez, P-16 Field Specialist, via fax to (956) 364-5143 or e-mail [priscilla.martinez@harlingen.tstc.edu](mailto:priscilla.martinez@harlingen.tstc.edu).
- Report needs to be submitted before the third business day of each month.



**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

This agreement constitutes a mutual understanding between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and:

Organization:  
Address:  
City, State, ZIP:  
Phone:  
Email Address:

**Terms of Agreement**

As official participants in the Go Center Initiative, the above-named school has agreed to provide the following prior to receiving training or any other support:

- Align with the “Education. Go Get It.” slogan, logo and marketing efforts.
- Operate as part of the statewide Go Center initiative.
- Maintain a student-led center on the campuses.
- Designate an adult Go Center sponsor to oversee the operation of the Go Center. This sponsor must either be a school employee or someone authorized by the school to have access to students and facilities of the school.
- Establish a physical location for Go Center that has at least two computers with Internet access. Students must have access to these computers and the computers must be clearly identified as part of a Go Center using marketing materials available through the THECB.
- Computer (Desktop PC/Laptop/Notebook) minimum requirements:
  - Pentium III (or better)
  - 512mb of RAM (or better)
  - 40GB hard drive (or better)
  - 48X CD-RW drive
  - Word Processing Software
- Desks/tables and chairs
- Telephone
- Printer
- Shelves with FAFSA forms, Texas Common Application, community college applications and other items
- Sign in area.

**Period of Agreement**

The participating parties agree to the terms outlined above for the 2006 - 2007 academic year, with plans to review these terms at the conclusion of noted academic year.

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined above. I recognize that I can amend these terms at any point by contacting the respective P-16 Field Specialist.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent/District Representative Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Go Center Sponsor Date

**Go Center Sign-in Sheet  
(See Attachment B, worksheet 1)**

**G-Force Information Sheet**  
**(See Attachment B, worksheet 2)**



## G-Force Interest

If you have an interest in becoming a High School G-Force member, please complete the following interest form. Your information is collected in accordance with our privacy policy.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: 9 10 11 12 Age: \_\_\_\_ Gender: Male Female Ethnicity (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(City, State, Zip)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you enrolled in...? (circle one): Regular AP Pre-AP Gifted/Talented

List the school and community activities in which you are involved:

In which elective classes are you enrolled during the fall and spring semesters?

Do you have a part-time job? If yes, what do you do, and how many hours a week do you work?

Will you be the first in your family to graduate from high school? **Yes** **No**

Will you be the first in your family to attend college? **Yes** **No**

Do you have any brothers or sisters attending college now? **Yes** **No**

Do you plan to attend college? **Yes** **No**

Where do you want to attend college?

What do you want to major in?

What type of information would be helpful to you as you prepare for college?

What are some of the challenges or barriers that you and your peers/friends think may keep you from going to college?

Are you willing to attend training sessions during the school year (on your own time on Saturdays or when there is no school) to learn about college and financial aid? **Yes** **No**

After you receive training, would you be willing to talk to other students about what you have learned, even if you do not know them? **Yes** **No**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## 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?***



## Monthly Report

---

School \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting Period \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

### Go Center Traffic

Number of students who visited the Center \_\_\_\_ (Individual) \_\_\_\_\_ (Total Visits)

### Estimation of number who visited for:

College applications/research	_____
Scholarships	_____
Financial Aid/FAFSA	_____
Career Exploration	_____
SAT/ACT	_____
Received G-Force help	_____
Attended presentation	_____

### Primary Activities/Events

*Please list and describe some of your events for this reporting period.*

**Comments:**

## **CHAPTER 7 STRATEGIC PLANNING**

### **Develop Strategic Plan**

The strength of the Go Center concept is its flexibility. While some structure is provided to direct the content of the message to be delivered, the key to the project is that the students will design local outreach strategies for dissemination of the materials and recruiting students. The strategic plan will consist of the following:

- Development of a strategic plan document to outline goals, objectives, activities and timelines for the project
- Development of an evaluation plan for the effort

### **Implementation of Strategy**

Below are two example implementation strategies that may be employed on your campus, the “122 & 125 Project”:

For the pilot, the G-Force members will focus on high school juniors and seniors initially. The Goal will be to increase the number of junior and senior students pursuing college. In doing this, the G-Force will pilot the “122” project. The 122 project is a peer-to-peer mentoring effort in which each member of the G-Force works to get at least one more student to enroll in college. Hence one (1) college-bound student turns to (2) two (2) college bound students. This is the basis for the name of the marketing concept, 122.

The second effort of the G-Force in the pilot will be to implement strategies targeting 6th grade students. The Goal of this effort is to get current 6th grade students to enroll in the proper courses in 7th grade that will lead to the college-bound course track in high school. One of the strategies that will be employed will be called “125”. Similar to 122 in design, each (1) G-Force member will work to get five (5) sixth graders to enroll in the proper courses. This is the basis for the program name - “125” (or one-to-five).

## CHAPTER 8 RESOURCES

A wealth of resources is available for your Go Center. The following information is a compilation of some of the more useful resources.

### Web Resources

A variety of web resources have proven to be of value to Go Centers. A few of the more utilized resources are listed below:

[www.CollegeForTexans.com](http://www.CollegeForTexans.com) – for information regarding admissions and financial aid in Texas.

[www.fasfa.ed.gov](http://www.fasfa.ed.gov) – (FASFA) Federal Application for Federal Student Aid. The starting point for most forms of financial aid.

[www.tgslc.org](http://www.tgslc.org) – TG (Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation) To access this website you need the sponsor's name, e-mail address, phone number, and your school name and address. You also need this information to order publications.

[www.edpubs.org/ml](http://www.edpubs.org/ml) (U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid) This website contains information about financial aid. All you need is an ML #. The sponsor can receive an ML # by calling 1-800-394-7084. Sponsors or students can then log on and order financial aid information.

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) – for information regarding the SAT

[www.thea.nesinc.com](http://www.thea.nesinc.com) - for information on THEA, the placement test used by community colleges

### Telephone Resource

Professionals at the **Texas Financial Aid Information Center, 1-888-331-8881**, can answer financial aid and general college admissions questions Monday through Thursday, 7 am – 7 pm and on Friday 7am – 5pm. Bilingual representatives are also available through this number.

### Printed Resources

College for Texans offers a variety of print materials that are useful to Go Centers. Each of the documents listed below are available free of charge or for a minimal cost at [www.CollegeForTexans.com](http://www.CollegeForTexans.com) under Additional Resources.

# APPENDIX

# COLLEGE FOR TEXANS OVERVIEW



*“Education. Go Get It.”* While this may sound like an easy task, the reality for hundreds of thousands of Texas students is that higher education seems out of reach. Texas has seen a steady decline in higher education participation rates when compared to other states, with only five percent of our state’s population enrolled in higher education; this rate is lower than it was a decade ago, and is projected to fall below 4.6 percent by 2015. In addition, many groups remain underrepresented in higher education, as participation among Hispanic, African-American and low income students remains disproportionately low.

## **College for Texans**

Recognizing that this is a significant concern for the state of Texas, the 2001 Texas Legislature mandated the creation of the *College for Texans* campaign through Senate Bill 573. *College for Texans* aims to galvanize efforts to reverse these trends. It includes a marketing campaign to raise awareness about the resources available to Texas students, and has gone beyond media outreach to grassroots efforts that enhance programmatic ties between students, their parents, and community partners who can offer hands-on support.

## **Go Centers**

*College for Texans* has been invited into high schools across the state to assist in establishing “Go Centers.” These Go Centers provide students with access to information about higher education, while also reaching out to those who may not have previously considered continuing their education beyond high school. More than a clearinghouse of information, they are centers of energy around which students, parents and educators can explore new and exciting options for the future.

## **G-Force**

The Go Center is the physical hub of energy for college preparation activities and creating a college-going culture within the school. In order to reach out to the student body, a group of students is selected on each campus to be trained as peer educators regarding the career exploration, college preparation, and financial aid processes. This group of students is referred to as the G-Force and is responsible for conducting campus outreach activities as well as working one-on-one with their peers in the Go Center. In addition, higher education institutions have formed their own G-Force teams to assist area high schools with their Go Centers.

## **Mobile Go Center**

The Mobile Go Center (MGC) is one of the state initiatives to help promote access to students and to the community letting everyone understand that college is for everyone. The Mobile Go Center will be utilized by the host community’s school district and local partner agencies according to the schedule originally submitted to include services such as college information or financial aid workshops, use of web-based college planning and information resources, and requesting of PIN numbers or submission of FAFSA by students. The audiences will typically consist of high school, middle school and elementary students, as well as parents and other community members. There are currently four MGCs operating in the state of Texas.

## **P-16 Council**

P-16 Councils are composed of representatives of the public and higher education institutions in a specific area. The councils’ purpose is to establish a coordinated plan of action that supports the College for Texans mission of creating a college-going culture within member institutions. Activities in the plan should provide an articulated approach toward assisting and supporting students’ efforts to participate in postsecondary education. These activities include academic developmental programs, financial aid awareness, and career counseling options.



## Reservation Agreement Form

### Reservation/Cancellation

Please provide 2 weeks notice for a reservation

Please provide 3 days notice for any cancellation

### Contact Information

School/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Event Information

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Parking location of mobile unit (Also provide physical Address): \_\_\_\_\_

Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_ Age / Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected number of attendees (estimate): \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Please attach agenda of events**

### Programs Utilized

- Career Cruising       TOPCAT       FAFSA Web site  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you requesting the assistance of the UTPA Collegiate G-Force to help staff the Mobile Unit? (Please Check One)**

*If you plan to use the Mobile Unit for extensive hours and / or more than one day, please plan to staff the mobile unit.*

- Yes  
 No

**If yes, what day and time?** \_\_\_\_\_

**You may also contact other Rio Grande Valley Collegiate G-Force to assist with your event:**

Richard Kirk  
TSTC G-Force  
956-364-4110

Edward Camarillo  
UTB/TSC G-Force  
956-982-0197

Kim McKay  
STC G-Force  
956-872-2096





# FREE TEST PREP

TOPCAT Program provides FREE online ACT and SAT test preparation to every high school student in Texas.

- Helps districts improve student performance
- Provides every student with a personal tutor
- Gives students the tools they need to prepare for and succeed on college admissions tests
- Provides coach with e-mails on student's performance via reporting feature
- Allows district administrators to obtain district reports

## ENROLL NOW!

**VISIT:**

**<http://testprep.collegefortexans.com>**

\*GRE test prep is also available.

For more information or to request TOPCAT presentation, contact:  
Priscilla Martinez,  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's  
P-16 Field Specialist  
956-364-4519