

Outline of Key Steps to Creating a CAM Campaign

What follows is a highly simplified outline of the College Access Marketing (CAM) *Create a Campaign* online guide. Once you've read through the whole guide and checked out the other resources at www.collegeaccessmarketing.org, use this outline as an overview and checklist for creating your own CAM campaign.

- 1) **Preliminary Research and Goal Setting.** Define the problem addressed, the target audience, the behavior change you are trying to influence, and the measurable outcomes the behavior change should create.
 - a) Use existing research or conduct new research to define the focus of your campaign:
What problem are you trying to solve?
 - i) Why is college access important to your state, community, or organization?
 - ii) What are the main obstacles to improving college access in your state or community?
 - iii) What problem is your campaign going to focus on?
 - b) Define your purpose
 - i) What is your campaign's purpose? What difference will it make?
 - c) Set the Context
 - i) What internal strengths and weaknesses do the organizations involved in your campaign bring?
 - ii) What are the external opportunities and threats?
 - iii) What does past experience tell you about this problem and how to solve it?
- 2) **Engagement of Key Stakeholders.** Identify key organizations who need to be involved; make the case to potential partners and funders to get their buy-in and support.
 - a) Finding funding and partners
 - i) Assess costs and benefits of partnerships and grants
 - ii) Make a good case for investing in your campaign
 - b) Making the case: find shared goals and understand their interests
- 3) **Audience Research.** Learn everything you can about your audience – how they view the problem, the barriers they face, what arguments appeal to them, and what message channels they use.
 - a) Who is affected by the problem you are trying to solve, and how can you group them?
 - b) Which groups will be primary and secondary target audiences?
 - c) Use research to answer core questions about your target audience, such as:
 - i) Who are they?
 - ii) What are they doing (or not doing) now?
 - iii) What do they know about getting into college and the step your campaign is focused on?
 - iv) What are their values and attitudes?
 - v) What barriers do they perceive to doing what you want them to do?

- 4) **Strategic and Tactical Planning.** Plan the strategies, tactics, and messages for your campaign, then test your messages and ideas with the audience. Make sure an evaluation plan is built into your campaign plan.
 - a) Set objectives: What do you want your audience to do?
 - i) Identify primary objectives (behaviors)
 - ii) Identify secondary objectives (knowledge and beliefs)
 - b) Set measurable goals
 - c) Build a strong marketing plan
 - i) Strategy: maximize benefits, minimize barriers
 - ii) Tactics: use tactics that fit your target audience, objective, and budget
 - iii) Message: more than just a slogan
 - (1) Use research and creativity
 - (2) Test your message
 - d) Budget: what you've got and what you'd like to have
 - i) Create a budget with tactics in mind
 - ii) Cover all the bases, from planning to evaluation

- 5) **Implementation.** Implement your plan: get the program off the ground
 - a) Hiring outside firms: be selective

- 6) **Monitoring and Reporting.** Monitor your progress, make changes as needed, and keep all stakeholders in the loop as the campaign rolls out. Document and report what you learned with the field.
 - a) Use data to assess your progress:
 - i) Baselines
 - ii) Tracking
 - iii) Effectiveness and outcomes
 - b) Plan to make adjustments
 - i) Set a schedule for evaluating your progress
 - ii) Keep track of how your plan and goals evolve
 - c) Leave a legacy: document, evaluate, and share your efforts with the field
 - i) Share information throughout the process, not just at the end
 - ii) Don't just hype the good news: help others learn from your experience. Share your materials with www.collegeaccessmarketing.org