



STUDENT RECRUITMENT GUIDE

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STUDENT RECRUITMENT GUIDE

NAF is a national education non-profit, which supports high school students' efforts to be future ready. NAF academies promote open enrollment and there are no prerequisites or fees for students to join an academy. This structure is designed to inspire students to achieve their full potential, by experiencing a NAF career academy's personalized learning environment. Academies accept students based on their interests, rather than academic or disciplinary records.

This Student Recruitment Guide provides resources and strategies to support educators' efforts to recruit and select students.

Student Recruitment

Recommended steps to market the academy for student recruitment:

- Create a recruitment team.
- Develop and execute a recruitment plan.
- Formulate a marketing strategy and messaging platform.
- Create a custom NAF academy logo.
- Produce marketing materials.
- Assess and reflect on the recruitment progress.
- Revise the recruitment plan as needed.

Student Selection Process

Students apply to the academy based on their interest in the academy's pathway and commit to a two-, three- or four-year program, including an internship, including work-based learning opportunities and internships.

Students, who have available space in their schedule for the academy's program of study courses, are eligible to enroll in the academy. In some situations, a lottery system randomly selects eligible students if there are more applicants than available seats.



RECRUITMENT PLANNING

Recruitment Team

The recruitment process begins with creating a team that develops the marketing and recruitment strategies design the required materials, using templates and resources provided by [NAF](#). Building a diverse team is essential, including students, parents, teachers, advisory board members, and business partners. Preferably, selecting team members with marketing backgrounds will be integral to meeting recruitment goals.

Academy student involvement is vital to bring the student perspective to the recruitment process, since they know what appeals to their peers. Peer-to-peer messaging truly resonates when originated from the same age group. Ultimately, students are the best recruiters because they share their successful academy-experiences, and they are also very creative and technologically savvy.

Recruitment Plan

The recruitment team completes the recommended steps below:

- Develop a recruitment plan that includes the following:
 - Goals and objectives
 - Strategic actions
 - Due dates and responsible team members
 - Required materials for targeted audiences
- Execute the recruitment plan
- Assess and reflect on the progress
- Revise the recruitment plan and follow up as needed



Recruitment Goals and Objectives

Identify recruitment goals and objectives that increase academy enrollment each year to meet NAF's enrollment thresholds.

Goals

In a single NAF academy, student enrollment must meet the following minimum thresholds:

- 200 students (4-year program)
- 150 students (3-year program)
- 100 students (2-year program)

Alternative: In high schools with one or more NAF academies, academy enrollment is 20% of the school enrollment.

Note: For all NAF academies, each grade level must enroll at least 20 students.

Objectives

The primary focus is to acquaint potential students and parents about the benefits of NAF academies with the following strategic actions:

- Orient students to growing industries with related career opportunities
- Promote an open enrollment process to ensure that the academy demographics reflect the demographics of the school
- Track academy recruitment efforts to ensure the academy can achieve enrollment thresholds
- Monitor student enrollment goals to ensure academy sustainability

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Marketing and publicizing NAF academy benefits help build awareness in the school's community and enhance student and business partner recruitment efforts. Strategic marketing informs the target audiences about the academy programs and promotes opportunities to get involved. Use a multimedia approach to attract and engage students and parents, including print, online/web-based, and social media strategies.

Garnering media attention for your academy is one of the best ways to publicize your efforts. This could entail inviting a reporter to shadow your academy in the classroom or at an event, writing a press release about upcoming events or announcements, or sharing success stories with [NAF's communications team](#). The more people that know about your academy, the more students will want to be involved.

Check out our resources within the [ASH Marketing Library](#)!

Target Audience

Identify the target audiences to develop the appropriate marketing messages that resonate with the primary stakeholders. The recruitment efforts must target the stakeholders (students, parents, siblings, teachers, and friends) who ultimately influence the student decision-making process. Targeted outreach ensures that the marketing materials are appropriate and appeal to each group.

Develop a Messaging Platform

Use NAF's messaging and talking points to showcase NAF's educational design, benefits of a personalized academy environment, and the advantages of connections with NAF's national network. Publicizing academy accomplishments and activities help to build awareness in the school community and boost student recruitment efforts.

Start by [downloading NAF's official messaging document](#)!

Items for the messaging platform:

- Academy mission and vision statements
- Brief academy overview featuring the career-pathway job opportunities
- NAF academy graduation outcomes
- Academy involvement with short-term vs. long-term engagement opportunities

Create Marketing Materials

[Send NAF a request to create a custom NAF academy logo](#) with the high school's name and academy career pathway.

After developing the messaging platform, the recruitment team begins producing marketing materials to increase awareness and interest in joining the academy. The marketing materials must be age-appropriate (students vs. adults) for the targeted audience.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS



Recommended marketing materials include:

- [Brochures/Flyers](#)
- Videos/Presentations
- Displays and posters
- Websites
- Social media accounts
 - Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube

Sample Marketing Materials

NAF's Marketing Library in the Academy Support Hub Plus (ASH) offers sample marketing materials and templates that are customizable. Download the template and adjust the sample content to showcase the unique features of the academy. Print and distribute at events and meetings or share virtually on the web and social media.

NAF is here to support academies, as they engage their target audiences digitally. Use NAF's sample website content, social media images, and template content for social media accounts.

Events

Getting a family to come to your high school campus is one of the most powerful and high-impact strategies you have in your recruitment toolbelt - recruitment events are becoming more important than ever before. Academies across the nation are amplifying their academy programs at different recruitment events hosted by middle schools, districts, and the high schools themselves. Consider the following items for your tabling efforts:

- Marketing Materials ([one-pagers and templates can be found in ASH](#)):
 - About NAF – For Students
 - About NAF – For Parents
 - About NAF
 - Custom Academy Brochure
- Booth Set Up:
 - Academy Banners
 - Flyer Stands
 - Giveaways – pens, chapsticks, stickers, etc.



VIRTUAL MARKETING

Virtual marketing is online advertising that includes formats, such as email and social media marketing, blogs, and other digital formats. Consider the following tips:

- Offer an easy-to-use website to connect with parents/students by providing them with essential academy enrollment information
- Advertise on social media to highlight academy programs
- Upload videos to YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram Reelz to highlight academy activities

Virtual Tours

- Engage potential students in a virtual academy tour to check out classrooms and program highlights with a few mouse clicks
- Go beyond posting interactive high school maps and links to Google Maps on the academy website by investing in virtual tour services

Virtual Events

Use Zoom, Google Hangout, or WebEx for live recruitment events, information sessions, and open houses. Consider the following tips:

- Keep live events to 30-60 minutes
- Record live events to create an archive of on-demand sessions for the future
- Share recorded sessions with prospective students

Virtual Community

Build a virtual community by reviewing the article: [How to create a virtual community in 5 easy steps](#) and consider the following tips:

- [Enhance the academy's social media presence](#) by creating a free social media account that is an excellent platform for engaging both potential and current students.
- Use interactive web content to share student, faculty, and alumni testimonials.
- [Share your stories with NAF!](#)
- Record academy videos to share with prospective parents and students.
- Follow @NAFCareerAcads across all social media channels
- Use NAF's hashtag #BeFutureReady when posting NAF academy news.



MAXIMIZE RECRUITMENT

Year-Round Recruitment

Student recruitment is an ongoing process throughout the school year.

- Recommended opportunities for continued recruitment efforts:
 - Invite academy students to participate in the recruitment process
 - Introduce and discuss academy programs at parent nights and staff meetings
 - Prepare news articles, public service announcements, and arrange for television coverage using NAF communication guidelines. Contact communications@naf.org for assistance
 - Conduct informational meetings in homerooms or classes across the curriculum and within the community
- Find opportunities to increase academy and student visibility by participating in:
 - On-campus events and activities involving student organizations, competitions, and homecoming celebrations
 - Off-campus community events with a NAF academy table/booth, academy banners, and students wearing NAF academy shirts and academy swag

Critical Marketing Opportunities

Maximize year-round recruitment opportunities by considering the following tips:

- Capitalize on academy student voice and leadership to showcase the academy
- Host student events to highlight academy student engagement
- Recruit middle school counselors and parents to be a part of local advisory boards
- Encourage advisory board members and parents to reach out to the community within their sphere of influence
- Invite school administrators and Career Technical Education (CTE) district coordinators to advisory board meetings to keep them informed and to become advocates for recruitment at the school and district
- Encourage high school counselors to play an active role on the advisory board
- Engage alumni to promote the value of staying connected to NAF's national network

Share Academy News with NAF

NAF mass communications feature academy news, projects, successes, photos, and other items celebrating academies' accomplishments.

Start sharing academy news by downloading this form or email updates to communications@naf.org.



STUDENT RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST

Recruitment Team Checklist

- ☐ Create the recruitment team list with roles & responsibilities
- ☐ Design and develop recruitment materials
- ☐ Schedule an orientation program
- ☐ Send an information letter and fact sheets to students, parents & the school community
- ☐ Train current NAF students to publicize and promote the program at an orientation event
- ☐ Create recruitment events for the:
 - NAF academy high school
 - Feeder middle schools
 - District-wide schools (if eligible)
- ☐ Conduct orientation events for recruiting students and include:
 - ☐ Presentations by the current students and alumni, a business leader, and NAF Academy Director/Site Coordinator
 - ☐ Distribution of academy application forms
 - ☐ Collection of application forms
- ☐ Engage eligible students in one-on-one sessions to develop their sense of belonging before they enter the academy
- ☐ Notify parents and students of selection results
- ☐ Require new students and parents to sign an agreement
- ☐ Schedule students in the NAF academy