

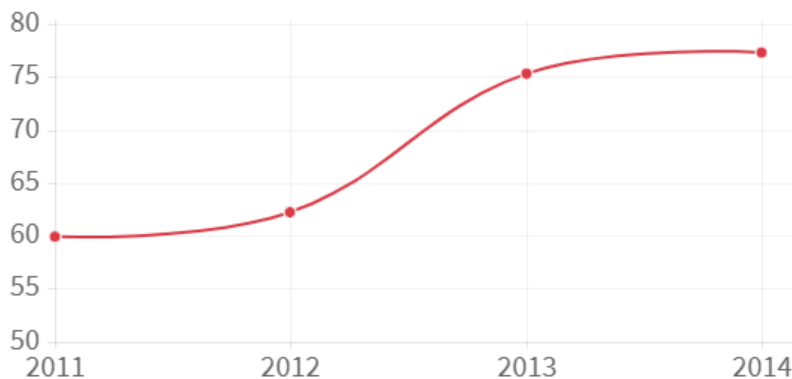
GEAR UP

What is GEAR UP?

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) initiative is one of the largest and most effective programs focused on increasing the college and career readiness of low-income students in communities nationwide. GEAR UP is a highly competitive grant program that helps empower local partnerships comprised of K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, state agencies, and community organizations to achieve three strategic goals:

- (1) increasing the postsecondary expectations and readiness of students;
- (2) improving high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates; and
- (3) raising the knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation, and financing among students and families.

PSE Enrollment



The percentage of former GEAR UP high school graduates who immediately enrolled in college

Who Does GEAR UP Serve?

Currently, GEAR UP serves over 560,000 students enrolled in over 3,525 secondary schools across 45 states. To be eligible for GEAR UP, a minimum of 50% of a school's student body must be enrolled in the federal free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) program.

How Does GEAR UP Work?

Applicants identify entire cohorts of 7th grade students enrolled in low-income schools, as identified by FRL rates, to be served. Services include a suite of academic, social, and planning support as students' progress from the middle grades through high school graduation, and often into the first year of college. Drawing upon research, GEAR UP engages students early, accelerates their readiness through supplemental programs, and expands the capacity of schools to create college going cultures. There are two grant types, one focused on states, and another on local partnerships to ensure both breadth and depth.

What Services Does GEAR UP Provide?

While each GEAR UP program is designed to meet the unique needs of their local community, GEAR UP programs typically provide a comprehensive portfolio of services, including: professional development for instructors and counselors, improving the quality and intensity of secondary school courses, mentoring, tutoring, scholarships and financial aid, college and career planning, and parental engagement programs designed to support college planning and enrollment.

What Makes GEAR UP Unique?

The complex problems GEAR UP addresses can only be solved through flexible, community-based strategies. By drawing on the unique needs and assets of communities—rather than a top-down, one-size-fits all approach—GEAR UP programs flourish in rural and urban communities alike. The program empowers local leaders from K-12, higher education, and community leaders to create and advance a shared agenda to strengthen pathways to college and career success.

The program is distinctive in that it is organized around the fundamental premise that college and career readiness begins early. By engaging students in the middle grades and supporting them through high school and beyond, GEAR UP brings a comprehensive and systemic approach that has a sustained impact on schools. Lastly, the program leverages local resources to maximize the return on federal investment. Every federal GEAR UP dollar is required to be matched by one non- GEAR UP dollar.

What is GEAR UP Funded at?

In FY 2019, Congress appropriated \$360 million for GEAR UP, a \$10 million increase over the prior year. Despite this increase, only a small fraction of eligible students are able to participate in the program. As a result of the growing demand for the program, access to GEAR UP has become extremely competitive (less than 1 in 5 applicants are funded) and remains persistently out of reach for many communities, despite their need for support.

Distribution of Awards by Type

STATE GRANTS

Total # of State Grantees: 39

Total Funding this Year: \$138,709,782

Avg. Annual Funding Per Grant: \$3,556,661

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Total # Partnership Grantees: 122

Total Funding this Year: \$210,391,666

Avg. Annual Funding Per Grant: \$1,845,540

Source: <https://www.edpartnerships.org/>