



# **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)**

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FY 2024 Grant Competition  
Partnership Program (84.334A)  
Applicant Resource



The GEAR UP Partnership program provides grants to group applicants to assist students in obtaining a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) and to prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education, especially for students from low-income backgrounds, including students with disabilities. In FY 2024, the Department estimates making approximately **34 awards**. The estimated range of awards is **\$100,000 - \$5,000,000** for each annual budget period, for a performance period of **72 or 84 months**.





## Overview and Eligibility



### Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) Partnership Grants

The GEAR UP discretionary grant program is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. It provides six- or seven-year grants to Partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. These competitive programs have an early intervention component designed to increase college attendance and success.

#### Eligible Entities

**Partnership** programs consist of (i) one or more local educational agency (LEA) and (ii) one or more degree-granting institutions of higher education (IHE). Additionally, it may include not less than two other community organizations or entities, such as businesses, professional organizations, State agencies, or other public or private agencies or organizations.

The applicant entity must be either an LEA or an IHE.

**Note:** A Partnership under this competition must follow the procedures under 34 CFR 75.127 – 75.129 in developing a group application. This includes developing an agreement that details the activities that each member of the group plans to perform and binds each member of the group to every statement and assurance made by the applicant in the application. This agreement must be submitted with the application.





## Project Elements

### Key Project Activities

#### Coursework:

encourage enrollment in rigorous and challenging coursework in order to reduce the need for remediation at the postsecondary level

#### Early Intervention

**Services:** implement activities to improve the number of participating students who obtain a secondary school diploma



#### Financial Aid:

provide financial aid information for postsecondary education

#### Postsecondary

**Preparation:** implement activities to improve the number of participating students who complete applications for and, enroll in, a program of postsecondary education

### Required and Permissible Activities

The GEAR UP program regulations outline which activities all projects must carry out as well as those that they may optionally choose to incorporate:

- Required Activities: [§ 694.21](#)

- Permissible Activities: [§ 694.22](#)

-In addition, Partnership grants may choose to provide scholarships to eligible participants.







## Matching Requirement



The GEAR UP statute includes requirements for grantees on matching funds. For full details, see the program regulations in [§ 694.7](#) and [§ 694.8](#), and also refer to the Notice Inviting Applications.



### Matching Requirement

**Partnerships** must provide from State, local, institutional, or private funds at least 50% of the cost of the program, which may be provided in cash or in-kind. That is, \$1 in non-federal funds for every \$1 in federal funds.



In-kind contributions may include:


- (1) The amount of the financial assistance obligated under GEAR UP to students from State, local, institutional, or private funds.
- (2) The amount of tuition, fees, room or board waived or reduced for recipients of financial assistance under GEAR UP.
- (3) The amount expended on documented, targeted, long-term mentoring and counseling provided by volunteers or paid staff of non-school organizations, including businesses, religious organizations, community groups, postsecondary educational institutions, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, and other organizations.
- (4) Equipment and supplies, cash contributions from non-Federal sources, transportation expenses, in-kind or discounted program services, indirect costs, and facility usage.



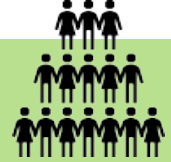
*Note:* Partnerships may request and be approved for a reduced match percentage at the time of application by demonstrating significant economic hardship. See [§694.8](#) of the GEAR UP program regulations and the Notice Inviting Applications for specific details on requesting a waiver of match requirements.



# Implementation Model

 **Partnerships** may only implement a cohort model.




## Cohort Model



Under the cohort model, Partnerships provide services to an **entire grade level** of students, with the below parameters:

- ☐ Provide services to at least one grade level of students (e.g., all 7<sup>th</sup> graders);
- ☐ Begin services no later than 7th grade;
- ☐ Ensure services are provided through the 12th grade to students in the participating grade level;
- ☐ Ensure services are provided through the students' first year of attendance at an institution of higher education (with a seven-year grant award);
- ☐ After the students complete the last grade level at the originating school, the project must continue to provide services to the school that the substantial majority of students attend; and
- ☐ Provide services to students who have received services under a previous GEAR UP grant award but have not yet completed the 12th grade.

## Important Notes

-  An applicant implementing a cohort model must comply with the following requirements regarding the originating target school:
  - At least fifty percent of the students enrolled in the school must be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; and
  - Must have a 7th grade class.
-  Programs implementing a cohort model can elect to provide services to an entire grade level of students who reside in public housing.
-  All originating target schools should be included in your application. School eligibility is determined based on the information provided in the application.



# Key Application Elements



The application includes three **optional** competitive preference priorities and five selection criteria.



**Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post-Enrollment Success**  
(up to 5 points)



**Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs**  
(up to 5 points)



**Moderate Evidence**  
(3 points)

Competitive  
Priorities

## Selection Criteria



**Need for Project:** (i) the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed, (ii) the extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure, and (iii) the extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

**Up to 10 points**



**Project Design:** (i) the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable, (ii) the extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale, (iii) the extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements, and (iv) how the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

**Up to 30 points**



**Adequacy of Resources:** (i) the adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources and the relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project, (ii) the extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits, and (iii) the potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends.

**Up to 15 points**



**Project Personnel:** (i) the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have been historically underrepresented, (ii) the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and (iii) other key personnel, and (iv) the extent to which the time commitments of key personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

**Up to 20 points**



**Project Evaluation:** (i) the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible, (ii) the extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes, and (iii) the extent to which the methods of evaluation will produce promising evidence about the project's effectiveness.

**Up to 25 points**





## Pre-Application Webinar



Still have questions? The Department is hosting GEAR UP Partnership Pre-Application Webinars with live Q&As. This is a chance to learn more about the program, eligibility, and the application process.

**The pre-application technical assistance webinars are scheduled for:**

**Thursday, March 21st at 1:00pm EST**

**and**

**Thursday, March 28th at 1:00pm EST**

**Look for more details and a log-in link for the webinars on our website:**

**<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/applicant.html>**







## FAQs & Resources



### Common Questions

**Does the amount of funds requested in the application need to stay the same for all years of the project?**

No, the funding amounts by year may vary based on anticipated needs and number of students. However, the funding amount can never go higher than year one.

**Are subgrantees allowable for this program?**

A grantee under this competition may **not** award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application.

See this webpage for additional FAQs:

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/faq.html>



### Resources & Contact



[Program Website](#)



[Grants.gov](#)

### Points of Contact

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