



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

---

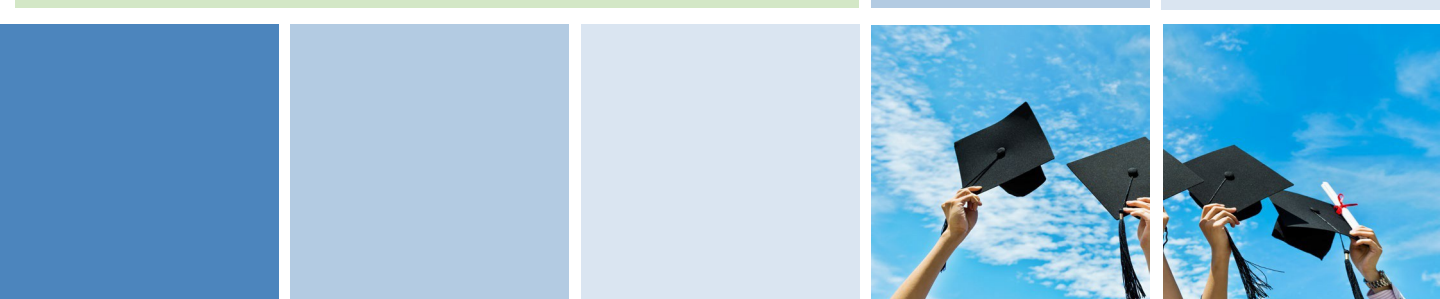
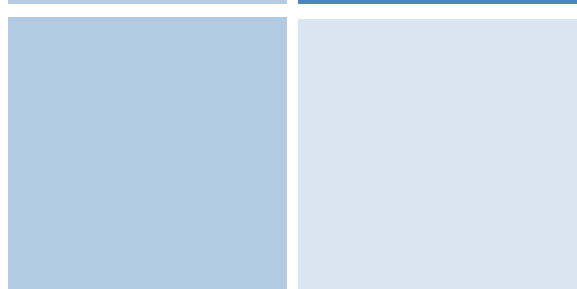
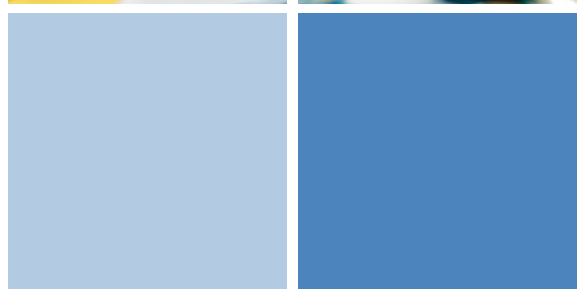
FY2024 Grant Competition  
State Program (84.334S)  
Applicant Resource



The GEAR UP State program provides grants to States 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 **10 awards**.

The estimated range of awards is **\$3,000,000 to \$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) State 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 States 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

**States**, which includes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Freely Associated States. **Only States without an active State GEAR UP grant**, or States that have an active State GEAR UP grant that is scheduled to end prior to October 1, 2024, are eligible to receive a new State GEAR UP award in this competition. Please also note that the applicant must be designated by the Governor or the chief executive for non-States.



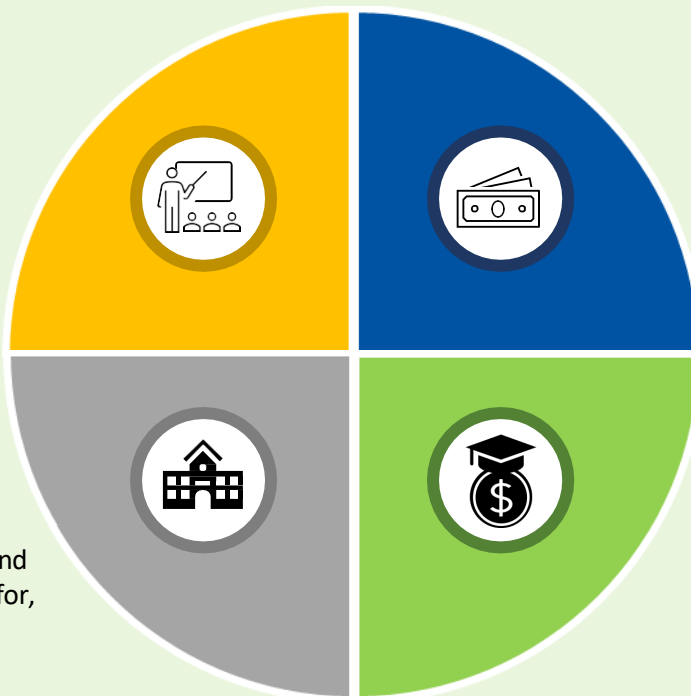


## Project Elements

### 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 and who complete applications for, and enroll in, a program of postsecondary education



**Financial Aid:** provide financial aid information for postsecondary education

**Scholarships:** provide scholarships to eligible students

### 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](#)

### Other Allowable Activities


Note: In addition to the required and permissible activities, a State may use grant funds to carry out other services and activities, including technical assistance, professional development, and dissemination. For a full list of these activities, see [§ 694.23](#).







## Scholarship & Matching Requirements


 The GEAR UP statute includes requirements for grantees on scholarships and matching funds. For full details, see the program regulations in [§ 694.7](#), [§ 694.8](#), [§ 694.12](#), and [§ 694.14](#), and refer to the Notice Inviting Applications.



### Scholarship Requirement

**States** must use at least 50% of grant funds to provide scholarships to eligible students.

#### Exception

 States may request an exception to use less than 50% of grant funds for scholarships if the State has another means or multiple means of providing scholarships to students eligible for a GEAR UP scholarship. States requesting an exception must provide documentation in their application of those other means of providing scholarship to eligible GEAR UP students.

#### Requirements for scholarships:

- (1) any student that qualifies as a student eligible for a GEAR UP scholarship will receive a scholarship that meets the minimum Pell Grant requirements.
- (2) the State will not impose additional eligibility criteria that would have the effect of limiting or denying a scholarship to an eligible student.



### Matching Requirement

**States** 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.



**Note:** 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.



# Implementation Model Choices

**States** may implement a priority students model and/or a cohort model.

## Priority Students Model



Under the **priority students** model, States must serve students in secondary school **who are eligible**:

- ☐ To be counted as students from families below the poverty level
- ☐ For assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or under Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance (FPFCAA)
- ☐ For assistance under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- ☐ Considered by the applicant to be disconnected

## Cohort Model



Under the cohort model, States 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 student's 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, for both implementation models. School eligibility is determined based on the information provided in the application.





# Application Components



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

## Competitive Preference Priorities



**Successful State GEAR UP grant prior to August 14, 2008**  
(up to 2 points)



**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)

## 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**

Selection Criteria





## Pre-Application Webinar



Still have questions? The Department is hosting GEAR UP State 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:**

● **Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm EST**

**and**

● **Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> 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 award subgrants to the following types of entities: LEAs, SEAs, IHEs, and nonprofit organizations. The grantee may only award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

**See this webpage for additional FAQs:**

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



### Resources & Contact



[Program Website](#)



[Grants.gov](#)

### Points of Contact

Ben Witthoefft

[ben.witthoefft@ed.gov](mailto:ben.witthoefft@ed.gov)

202-453-7576

Nicole Josemans

[Nicole.Josemans@ed.gov](mailto:Nicole.Josemans@ed.gov)

202-453-7111

