



Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

FAQ's ? | E-mail

[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)

[FUNDING](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

FY2001 GEAR UP Funding Information

Background:

The mission of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education through school reform efforts which:

- promote significant growth in student academic achievement through high standards and a rigorous academic core curriculum;
- increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options and financing; and
- provide professional development related to increasing academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education.

GEAR UP provides multi-year competitive grants to States and to local partnerships between postsecondary institutions, low-income middle schools and high schools, and at least two other organizations, such as businesses, community based, religious, or parent organizations, and student groups.

GEAR UP Differs from, but Complements, Existing Federal Programs in Several Significant Ways:

- GEAR UP Partnerships start earlier—no later than the 7th grade—and follow students through 12th grade to ensure that low-income students take rigorous academic courses, such as algebra by the 8th grade.
- GEAR UP serves entire grades of students to transform their schools. To support students to successfully complete college preparatory courses, integral academic support services are provided, including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and professional development to increase the subject area knowledge of teachers and support them in their efforts to ensure high academic achievement.
- GEAR UP can provide postsecondary scholarships to students, as well as information to students and parents about postsecondary options and financial aid. GEAR UP provides early notification of student eligibility for financial aid through the 21st Century Scholar Certificates.
- GEAR UP leverages local resources and builds capacity by encouraging postsecondary institutions to partner with low-income middle schools and outside organizations. In addition, it leverages non-federal resources with a dollar-for-dollar matching requirement.
- GEAR UP grants bolster State efforts to support early college preparation programs and scholarships.
- GEAR UP is based on proven models of success, such as I Have a Dream and Project GRAD, that demonstrate the success of partnerships, school reform, and scholarships in early intervention programs. These programs have significantly improved low-income student test scores, high school graduation rates, and postsecondary enrollment rates.

In FY2000, GEAR UP Was Appropriated \$200 Million.

- These funds will support continuation of \$120 million in GEAR UP grants to 21 states and 164 partnerships involving more than 1,000 organizations as well as colleges and middle schools across the country.
- Approximately 767,000 low-income students will have the opportunity to receive mentoring, tutoring, and financial aid advice, and the support to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard, and take the rigorous academic courses needed to go to college and succeed.
- Forty states and Puerto Rico, Guam and Micronesia received a State or Partnership grant in FY1999.
- This year, a new competition for \$47 million will fund approximately 6 more State grants and 75 more Partnership grants to be awarded in September 2000.

Interest in GEAR UP Has Far Exceeded Available Funding.

In its first year, GEAR UP received 678 Partnership and State grant applications—covering all 50 States, more than 4,500 organizations, and one out of five colleges in the Nation. Only one out of four Partnership applications, and only half of the State applications, could be awarded with the available funding.

President Clinton Has Requested \$325 Million for GEAR UP for FY2001 that would:

- Provide for at least one State or partnership grant in every eligible State and territory.

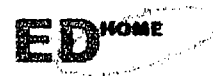
- Leverage the resources of more than 2,400 community organizations and businesses as partners.
- Provide services to some 1.4 million students.

The House and Senate Spending Bills Fall At Least \$100 Million Short of the President's FY2001 Request for GEAR UP.

- The Senate Bill provides only \$225 million for GEAR UP in FY2001, and would deny 407,000 low-income middle and high school students support to get into and succeed in college.
- The House Bill freezes GEAR UP funding at \$200 million for FY2001, and would deny GEARUP services for 644,000 low-income middle and high school students.



[Gear Up Home Page](#)



This page last updated April 13, 2000 (ss)



Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

FAQ'S ? | E-MAIL

[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)

[FUNDING](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

FY2000 GEAR UP Funding Information

The Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2000 Funds GEAR UP at \$200 Million:

- At this level, GEAR UP Partnerships and State Grantees will provide services to more than an estimated 482,000 disadvantaged students in the 2000-2001 school year.
- \$153 million of the \$200 million will go to fund continuation grants, making \$47 million available for new State and Partnership grants.
- This funding level will mean awarding about 75 new partnership grants and approximately 6 new state grants in 2000, based on FY1999.

GEAR UP's 2000 Competition will be highly competitive:

- The combination of less new money plus increased awareness of and interest in GEAR UP will almost certainly result in a more competitive process next Spring.
- Successful applicants will start early, developing partnership commitments, planning services, lining up matching resources, and drafting their proposals even before the new application package is printed. The new application package should be available by February, 14, 2000.
- The number of applications received in FY99 far exceeded the funding available, showing the strong need and support for GEAR UP's early intervention programs:
- The first number of first year grant applications for GEAR UP was extraordinary – 678 Partnership and State grant applications, covering all 50 States, more than 4,500 organizations, and 1 out of 5 colleges in the nation.
- Only 1 out of 4 Partnership applications were funded with the 1999 Appropriations, and only *half* of the State applications could be funded.

GEAR UP Is Already Building Pathways to College for More than 250,000 Disadvantaged Youth: In August, President Clinton announced the first GEAR UP grants to 21 states and 164 partnerships of colleges and middle schools across the country. These grants will serve more than 250,000 disadvantaged children, encouraging them to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard, and take the right courses to go to college. 43 states and territories received either a State or Partnership grant. GEAR UP provides multi-year competitive grants to States and to local partnerships between colleges, low-income middle schools and high schools, and at least two other organizations, such as businesses, community based, religious, or parent organizations, and student groups. The current GEAR UP partnerships involve more than 1,000 organizations, such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, local chambers of commerce, and individual companies such as Wal-Mart, Unisys, and Bell Atlantic.

GEAR UP Differs From, But Complements, Existing Federal Programs By:

- **Starting earlier** – GEAR UP Partnerships start no later than the 7th grade to ensure that more low income students are prepared to enter college and succeed students reach high school having taken algebra and other courses needed for college, and follows students through high school.
- **Schoolwide reform** – GEAR UP Partnerships work with entire grades of students to transform their schools and school feeder systems, by providing comprehensive services including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, strengthening the school curriculum, professional development for teachers and staff, involving parents, and supporting other activities such as after-school and summer programs and college visits.
- **Leveraging local resources** – GEAR UP is a partnership between colleges low-income middle schools which leverages non-federal resources with a 1-for-1 match requirement
- **Supporting college scholarships** – GEAR UP can provide college scholarships and provides information to students and

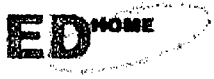
parents about college options and financial aid, including providing students with 21st Century Scholar Certificates – an early notification of their eligibility for financial aid.

- **Bolstering State efforts** – GEAR UP grants to States support college preparation programs and scholarships.

November 30, 1999



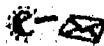
Gear Up Home Page



This page last updated April 13, 2000 (ss)



Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

FAQ's ? 

[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)

[FUNDING](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

Helping More Students Prepare for College through GEAR UP

"I also ask this Congress to support our efforts to enlist colleges and universities to reach out to disadvantaged children starting in the sixth grade so that they can get the guidance and hope they need so they can know that they, too, will be able to go on to college."

--President Clinton, State of the Union address, January 27, 1998

GEAR UP is a national initiative to encourage more young people to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard and take the right courses to go to college.

- High-achieving students from low-income families are five times as likely not to attend college than high-achieving students from high-income families [NELS 1998].
- In a recent survey, almost 70% of parents indicate that they have little information or want more information about which courses their child should take to prepare for college, and 89% of parents want more information about how to pay for college, including the use of tax credits [Gallup, Sept. 1998].

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). GEAR UP is modeled in part after President Clinton's *High Hopes for College* proposal to create a national goal that every college should partner with at least one middle school in a low-income community to help raise expectations and ensure that students are well-prepared for college. GEAR UP also builds on an former State early college awareness program. This new competitive grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Education supports early college preparation and awareness activities at both the local and the State level.

GEAR UP Partnership grants. As outlined in the President's High Hopes for College proposal, this initiative awards multi-year grants to locally-designed partnerships between colleges and low-income middle schools, plus at least two other partners -- such as community organizations, businesses, religious groups, State education agencies, parent groups, or non-profits -- to increase college-going rates among low-income youth. To be most effective, partnerships are based on the following proven strategies:

- **Informing students and parents about college options and financial aid,** including providing students with a 21st Century Scholar Certificate -- an early notification of their eligibility for financial aid;
- **Promoting rigorous academic coursework** based on college entrance requirements;
- **Working with a whole grade-level of students** in order to raise expectations for all students; and
- **Starting with 6th or 7th grade students and continuing through high school graduation** with comprehensive services including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other activities such as after-school programs, summer academic and enrichment programs, and college visits.

GEAR UP State Grants. These grants build on the experience of the former State grant program replaced by the GEAR UP program in the new HEA law. GEAR UP State grants will be awarded to States to provide early college awareness activities, improved academic support, information on paying for college, and scholarships. The proposed programs must treat low-income students as a priority and should be coordinated with the efforts of schools, local community organizations, and colleges and universities.



Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

FAQ's ? |

[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)

[FUNDING](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

The Challenge

Helping More Low-Income Students Prepare for College

Many of America's talented young people end their formal education at high school. For them, the opportunity to prepare for and go on to college is not apparent because of low expectations and motivation, a lack of appropriate curriculum, instruction, and support, and/or the absence of information that clearly delineates available educational options and opportunities. Although this problem cuts across all income levels (fully a third of middle income students with average test scores do not attend college), it is particularly acute for the nation's poor. Even high academic achievers from low-income families are five times less likely to attend college than their high achieving more economically advantaged peers.

The reasons for this are myriad. Too many of this nation's economically disadvantaged children are neither encouraged sufficiently to strive for college nor prompted early enough to think about continuing beyond high school. As a result, they do not plan for college and fail to enroll in secondary school courses needed for college entry. For those who do take the right courses, however, the kinds of extra support they may need to succeed academically are often unavailable. Moreover, as studies show, the parents of these same students seldom feel that they possess the information to encourage and guide their children toward post-secondary education. They need and want more information about college preparatory and advanced placement courses as well as the cost of college and how they can afford to pay for it. Without this information they are at a loss to encourage and guide their children toward a college education. The result is that unlike their more advantaged peers, whether children from low-income families get the right information and encouragement, take the right courses and get the help they need to succeed is too often left to happenstance rather than design. This situation is not only inherently unfair and a waste of young talent, but also a threat to the nation's long-term prosperity. For it is through the knowledge and skills of its citizens and by extension the long-term educational attainment of its children, that a nation realizes its future.

In recognition of the need to provide a true opportunity to a quality education that all children deserve, GEAR UP was signed into law as part of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (Public Law 105-244). GEAR UP is designed to enable more young Americans to stay in school, study hard, and take the right courses to go to college. It is aimed at enabling low-income communities and States to create new or expanded plans that strengthen their schools and provide educational opportunities for low-income students. Based upon proven models, GEAR UP supports local schools, community-based organizations, businesses, institutions of higher education, and States to work together to help students and their parents gain needed knowledge, and strengthen academic programs and student services in the schools. Through GEAR UP, the U.S. Department of Education addresses the challenge to help more low-income students become prepared academically and financially to enter into and succeed in college.

The Response Must Address Need, Effective Strategies, And Commitment

Grants awarded under this initiative will support local partnerships and State efforts to develop or expand comprehensive programs that provide the opportunities, support, and information low-income middle and high students need to: have high expectations, stay in school, study hard, and go to college. Every school -- large or small, urban, suburban or rural -- in the country has the responsibility to provide access to a quality education for all students, rich or poor.

To insure that low-income students have the opportunities, support and information they need to go on to college, GEAR UP programs must develop effective responses to three demands.

NEED: Students from low-income families have low rates of academic success and low levels of academic attainment relative to their more advantaged peers. This is particularly true of students who attend schools where the majority of their classmates come from equally modest circumstances. In contrast, low-income students attending schools where the majority of students are more advantaged, record higher levels of achievement and attainment than low-income students enrolled in schools where poverty is pervasive. Put simply, poverty has the most negative impact where it is the most concentrated. If we are to meet the challenge of helping more low-income students prepare for college, therefore, we must concentrate on those neighborhood schools within communities of high financial need.

Of course, even in some of this nation's poorest communities there are schools that manage to produce students with the academic achievement and educational attainment comparable to those found in more affluent areas. These schools -- staffed by well-prepared and

committed individuals -- have been particularly successful in mitigating the negative effects of poverty on young minds. They have done so, by first carefully assessing the academic, social, and support needs of students and the concomitant programmatic needs and gaps in services that prevent students from being successful. If we hope to help more low-income students succeed, the first thing we must do is look within schools and the community to identify what must be changed, what must be improved, and what must be added or enhanced so that every student has a real opportunity for academic success and educational attainment.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES: Figuring out what the needs and gaps in services are, is only a start. Delineating and initiating strategies to address those needs is at the heart of meeting the challenge. For example, although taking algebra by the eighth or ninth grade is a gateway to college preparatory courses, such as geometry, trigonometry, chemistry, calculus, and physics, only 15% of low-income students enroll in algebra by the eighth grade. This despite the fact that those low-income students who do take algebra and geometry are almost three times more likely to attend college than those students who do not. Getting low-income students to take algebra by the eighth or ninth grade, therefore, is a worthy goal. However, meeting the need to improve students' basic mathematics skills will likely be a precursor to taking and successfully completing an algebra course. What strategies and services will be employed to meet this need yet keep students on track to take algebra no later than the ninth grade? Will it require curricular changes? Upgraded teacher professional development? Smaller classes with more targeted instruction? One-on-one tutoring? Saturday academies? All of the above? In short, how exactly can the needs of students and required changes in schooling be tied to strategies that ensure that needs are met and programmatic gaps are filled?

As another example, the parents of these students may have no clear idea of how one prepares for college or the existence of available financial assistance to offset the expense of higher education. In a recent Gallup poll, 70% of parents indicated that they have little information, or need more information, about which courses their child should take to prepare for college, and 89% want more information regarding how to pay for college. Yet, this kind of knowledge is vital if parents are to serve as effective academic mentors for their children. Clearly, here is a need that must be met because it impacts the expectations and aspirations that low-income parents have for their children. In addressing this need, some questions that arise may be "what strategies best engage parents in the education of their children?" Or, "in what forms and in what ways should needed knowledge be conveyed so that parents may serve as effective educational mentors and partners in their children's long term educational goals?"

These are the kinds of issues that must be addressed and the subsequent planning and strategies that must take place if individual and programmatic needs are to be met. To meet the challenge, therefore, the response must be systematic and comprehensive if more low-income students are to realize the potential that lies within each of them.

COMMITMENT: The concept of a college awareness and preparation is not new. We have known for some time that such programs can be successful. Students who participate in high-quality college awareness programs and strengthen their academic preparation attend college at a higher rate than those who do not. What sets GEAR UP apart from the other programs? First, GEAR UP reflects the call by hundreds of college presidents and scores of community organizations for a new national ethic that all colleges should partner with low-income, middle grade schools in order to help prepare the children of our nation for college. If we, as a nation, truly value education, those who have experienced college must help our young people get on the right path to college and success. Second, GEAR UP provides for an ongoing process that will enable students and families to learn about and plan for college over a period of years. We must reach students -- and their parents -- far earlier, and in far greater numbers, with accurate information about the demands and expectations of college, both academic and financial. Third, GEAR UP uses a different, more systematic approach that involves students and families, K-12 schools, colleges and community-based groups. The lack of experience with college -- not just within families but within entire neighborhoods -- has meant that piecemeal and pullout programs have reached only a fraction of the population. GEAR UP programs will provide college awareness services, including mentoring, academic course counseling and financial aid information as well as strengthen the instruction and course offerings in participating middle and high schools. These services must be provided during as well as outside the school day. This is what must be done if we are to help more low-income students prepare for college.

This kind of vision calls for commitment on the part of all involved -- educators, parents, students, partners, and states. It also calls for a commitment to continue the program beyond the federal support that initiates it lest it die after the funding runs out. Commitment of this sort requires resources, of course, but it is sustained on success both incremental and long-term. Commitment to careful planning, proper execution, teamwork, communication, self-reflection, and dedication to continuous improvement ensure such success. And success in these terms is absolutely vital if we are to meet the challenge to give low-income students high expectations, have them stay in school, study hard, and go to college.



[Gear Up Home Page](#)



This page last updated April 13, 2000 (ss)



Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

FAQ's ? |

[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)

[FUNDING](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

WHY GEAR UP IS IMPORTANT FOR AMERICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE

May 19, 2000

GEAR UP is creating college opportunities for at-risk youth.

- Enacted in 1998, GEAR UP funds partnerships of high-poverty middle schools, colleges and universities, community organizations, and business to work with entire grade levels of students. The partnerships provide tutoring, mentoring, information on college preparation and financial aid, an emphasis on core academic preparation and, in some cases, scholarships.
- GEAR UP works with students starting in 7th grade or earlier through high school graduation because research shows that students taking challenging courses (including algebra) in middle school are much more likely to succeed in high school and go on to college.
- In its first year, GEAR UP is serving more nearly 450,000 students nationwide. Over 1,000 organizations are GEAR UP partners, including colleges and universities, libraries, arts organizations, local chambers of commerce, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Wal-Mart, Unisys, and the New York Times Education Program. Next academic year, GEAR UP will serve over 750,000 students and President Clinton has requested \$325 million in FY 2001 to serve 1.4 million children.

The College Opportunity Gap Is Real.

- Only 47 percent of low-income high school graduates immediately enroll in college or trade school, compared to 82 percent of high-income students. (National Center for Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 1999*)
- Only 18 percent of African-Americans and 19 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earn a bachelor's degree by their late twenties, compared to 35 percent of whites. (NCES, *Condition of Education 1999*)
- The opportunity gap persists regardless of academic preparation: 22 percent of college-qualified high school graduates with low family incomes don't pursue post-secondary education, compared to only 4 percent of high-income graduates. (NCES, *Access to Postsecondary Education for 1992 High School Graduates*.)

GEAR UP's Approach Is Unique Among Federal Programs. GEAR UP complements existing federal programs by:

- **Starting earlier.** GEAR UP partnerships start no later than the 7th grade because research shows that students who take challenging coursework in middle school, including algebra, are far more likely to succeed in high school and college.
- **Staying with children through high school graduation.** GEAR UP provides long-term mentoring over a period of six or more years, helping children stay on track for college, and often providing scholarships when they reach college.
- **Transforming schools.** GEAR UP partnerships work with entire grades of students to transform their schools. Services include mentoring, tutoring, strengthening curriculum, teacher professional development, summer and after-school academic and enrichment programs, and college visits.
- **Supporting college scholarships.** Some GEAR UP partnerships provide college scholarships, which research shows to be particularly important in preventing drop-outs among low-income students.

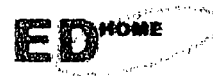
- **Leveraging local resources.** GEAR UP encourages colleges and other community organizations to partner with low-income middle schools and leverages non-federal resources with a one-for-one match requirement.
- **Bolstering state efforts.** GEAR UP also supports state early college preparation and scholarship efforts.

GEAR UP is Modeled on Proven Programs. Evaluation research on existing programs demonstrates the value of and the need for the GEAR UP approach. Evaluation research on existing programs demonstrates the value of and the need for the GEAR UP approach.

- **I Have a Dream** provides an entire grade of low-income students with intensive mentoring, academic support, and a promise of public and private aid for college tuition. Roughly 75 percent of Chicago IHAD students in the class of 1996 graduated from high school, as did only 37 percent of students in the control group.
- **Project GRAD** is a college-school-community partnership to improve inner-city education. Students receive curricular, counseling, and scholarship opportunities to bring college within reach. Project GRAD has produced dramatic results on a large scale. The percentage of middle school students passing the Texas statewide math test has tripled from 21 percent in 1995 to 63 percent in 1998. The number of students graduating from one Project GRAD high school increased by 64 percent between 1988 and 1998, while the overall district number declined by 7 percent, and five times more students are going to college.



[Gear Up Home Page](#)



This page last updated May 19, 2000 (ss)